

A large, stylized, handwritten signature in dark ink, possibly reading "Wm. H. Smith", written across the bottom half of the page. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Wm." being particularly prominent.

Wm. D. Wells

Wm. D.

Wm. D.

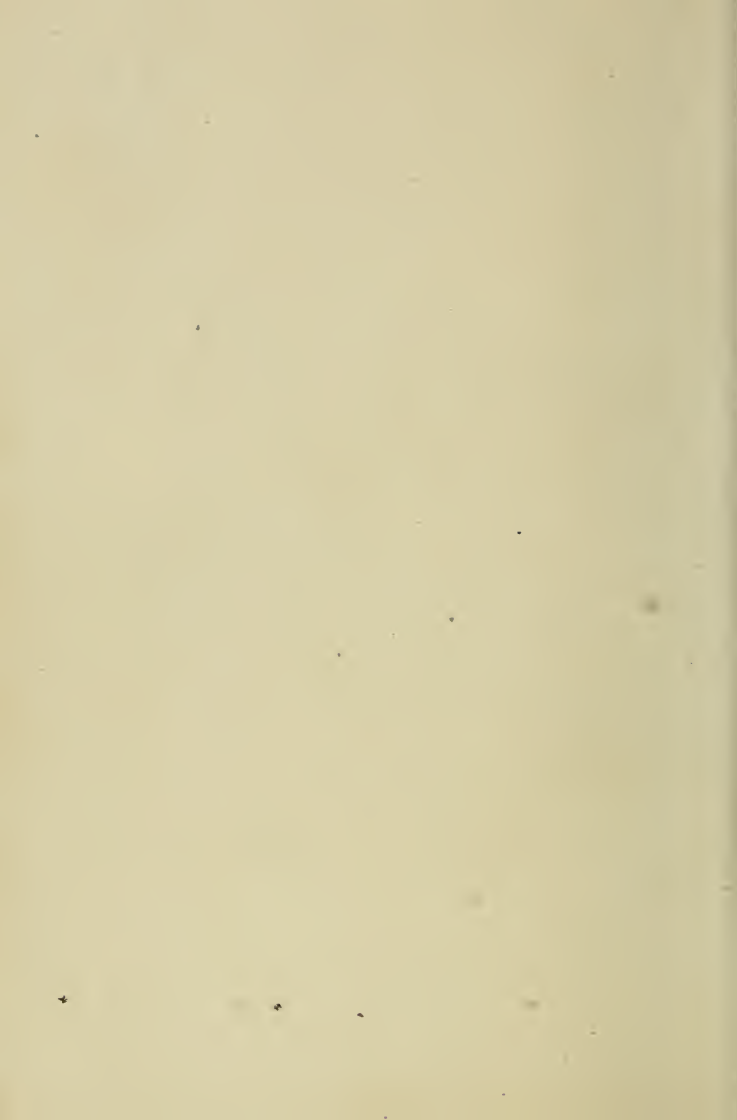
Wm. D.

Wm. D.

Wm. D.

Wm. D.

BERTHA WEISSER'S WISH.





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2013





Bertha Weissner's Wish.

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

BY

M. L. B.

"Lord have mercy upon us, and write all thy laws in our hearts
we beseech Thee. —"



BOSTON:
E. P. DUTTON AND COMPANY.
NEW YORK: HURD AND HOUGHTON.

1865.

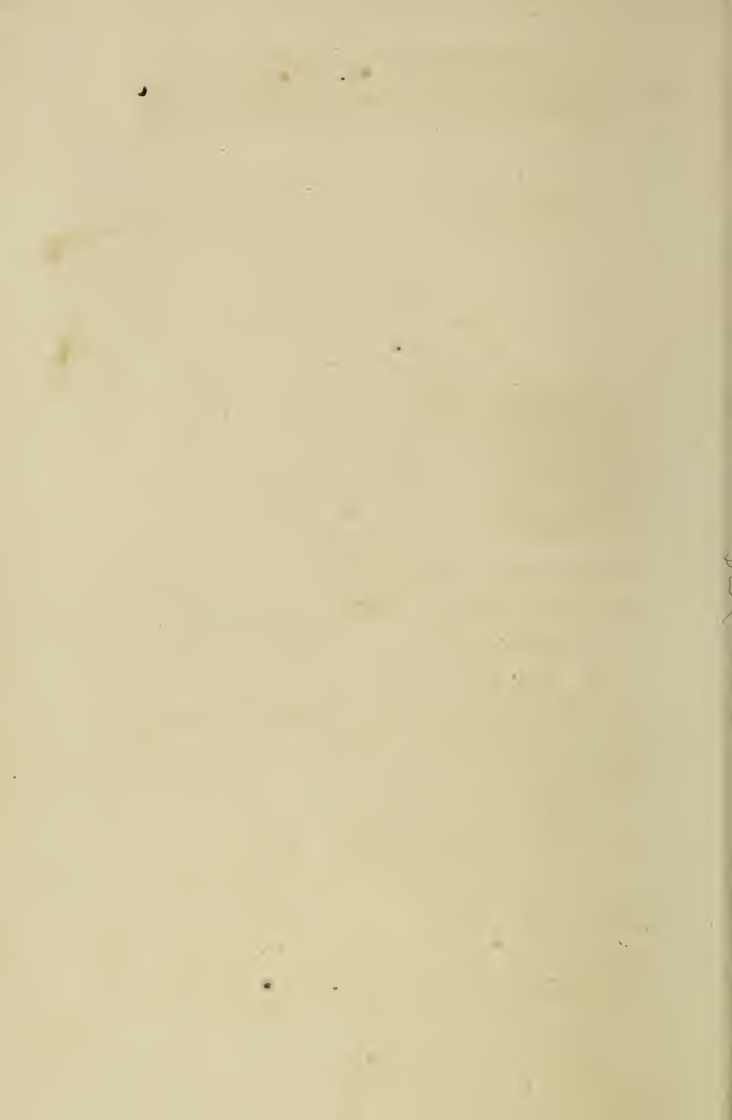
Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1863, by
E. P. DUTTON AND COMPANY,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachu-
setts.

RIVERSIDE, CAMBRIDGE:
STEREOTYPED AND PRINTED BY H. O. HOUGHTON.

RBR
Jantz
#422

CONTENTS.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. BERTHA'S HOME	7
II. BERTHA'S WISH	14
III. "HOW TO DO IT"	21
IV. LITTLE MARY'S HOME	29
V. "WHOSE LOST HAVE I FOUND"	44
VI. TIM TURNS POLICEMAN	56
VII. ANOTHER CHASE	69
VIII. BERTY RUNS AWAY FOR THE LAST TIME	78
IX. THE HOSPITAL.	86
X. MRS. GREY'S SUSPICION	95
XI. THE CHAPEL SERVICE, AND WHAT CAME OF IT	103
XII. THE WISH FULFILLED	119





BERTHA WEISSER'S WISH.

CHAPTER I.

BERTHA'S HOME.



IT was a dreary, wet October day, and drawing towards the twilight. The dull leaden-looking sky, the wet slippery pavements, the chilly, cross, uncomfortable passengers, gave to even the brightest and most cheerful streets of the great city a very dismal look; and, as for the meaner ones, with their rows of dreary little shops and tumble-down houses, their reeking gutters and dripping wayfarers, they were utterly forlorn.

In one of the meanest of these forlorn streets, in the back attic of one of these tumble-down houses, a little girl sat looking out at the window. It was not a pleasant prospect in the brightest of weather, that little crowded court, upon which everybody's

back-door opened, and where everybody's rubbish was collected; but the child was not looking at the court. Neither did she seem to be looking at the sky, though the little pale face was turned wistfully upward; she rather seemed to be thinking intently upon something which occupied all her mind, and shut out for the moment the dreary court below, the dismal sky above, and even the poor little room around her.

A very poor little room it was, indeed,—its only furniture being a ragged, ill-made bed, a rickety stand, two broken chairs, and an old painted chest, near which a rusty stove-pipe came up through the floor and passed out again at the low roof. But all the room was brightened somehow by a group of four merry, rosy children, who sat upon this chest, their little bare legs dangling, and their damp garments steaming in the heat, laughing and chattering together in a queer mixture of German and English, which none but an emigrant's child could understand.

“Bert!” cried the elder of the two boys, glancing towards the window; “what are you looking for, Bert? — the moon?”

The children all laughed at this sally, but "Bert" paid no attention; seeing which, the boy sprang down from the chest and, with a vigorous pull at the flaxen curls, turned the wistful face round towards him. "Bert!" said he, "don't you know, if we don't pick the rags soon, it'll be quite dark, and then Moses will be shut up, and we'll get nothing for *das Brod* to-morrow? Wake up! wake up!"

The girl made no answer, but, with a weary sigh, picked up an old basket filled with wet rubbish, and, turning the contents out upon the floor, began, with her brother's help, to sort them carefully into separate little heaps; for Bertha Weisser, my dear children, the dreaming girl by the window, and the heroine of my little story, was nothing more nor less than a poor little German rag-picker.

Poor and little as she was, however, Bertha had arrived at a dignity which few of my young readers have reached, I hope; for Bertha was the head of this little household,—the one whom alone all the children were bound to "mind," and to whom also, alas! they were bound to look for their daily bread;

for Berty's father had died at sea, and her mother, not taking kindly to the foreign land, had pined away soon afterward, leaving her helpless family to get their own living as best they could.

And the best way Bertha could think of—for she was not very wise, being only eleven years old—was, to gather the rags and papers, the old bits of iron and copper, and nails and other rubbish, from the gutters, and sell them to Moses, an old Jew who lived near her lodging; or else sometimes to sweep the crossings with a stump of broom, looking the while so forlorn and piteous that kind passengers, when they were not in too great haste, would fling her a penny.

This was a very poor way to get a living, as you may suppose; and a very poor living Berty would have gotten by it even if she could have spent all her earnings upon herself, which was by no means the case; for there were Lina, and Gottlieb, and Rosa, and little Fritz, the baby, all younger and therefore more helpless than herself; and Berty must care for them all; for had she not promised her dead mother, and were they not her

little family, the only ones this side the broad ocean who had kindred blood of hers in their veins ?

To be sure, old Biddy Flanagan, to whom the house belonged, let them have the back attic, where their mother had died, rent-free, because, as she said, it was but a poor place, and she'd no heart to turn out "the motherless orphans" ; then, too, Gottlieb was growing a sturdy lad, with very sharp eyes for old nails and horse-shoes ; and besides, the house-people often gave Fritz a penny when they met him toddling about the passages ; for Fritz was a pretty baby, — bright-eyed and rosy-cheeked, and sweet enough, in spite of his rags, to open the hearts of people less kind than Biddy Flanagan's poor lodgers. And beyond all this, — which Berty counted great good-fortune, — an old lady in the next street, who had known their mother in the dear old Father-land, sent them every week a full meal of broken victuals. So Berty thought this world a very kind world, though her poor little heart was full, from morning till night, with care for *die Kleinen*, as she lovingly called the children in her pleasant German tongue.

And Berty's heart had been fuller than usual these few weeks past; for, besides all the care, it had held a great wish in it, — a wish that filled it almost to bursting; and yet this wish was such a very impossible one, that Berty could think of but one way — and that a very impossible way — of getting it fulfilled: — “If but a fairy would come along, — a fairy godmother such as Mrs. Flanagan sometimes told them about, when she was good-natured and not too busy, — and offer Bert one of three wishes; O *then!*” But New York was not “ould Ireland,” as Biddy often assured them, and so, alas! the fairy never came. Still the wish held its place, and swelled the poor child's heart all the more, perhaps, that she never told it to any one.

Sometimes she would lie awake far into the night, staring with wide-open eyes at the blank darkness of her attic, hugging little Fritz in her arms, and thinking what if she *had* a fairy godmother, and what if she *should* come and bring the wish, until all the darkness was full of glorious visions, and poor little Berty, the German rag-picker, lying

there upon her bed of straw, in Biddy Flanagan's back attic, dreamed dreams as sweet as any which visit the soft, guarded pillows of you happy children who fall asleep with father's good-night blessings in your ears, and mother's good-night kisses on your lips. Yes, the dear Heavenly Father, who bends so lovingly from his Eternal Throne to listen to your evening prayer, heard Berty's German *Vaterunser* also, and watched over her, perhaps, all the more tenderly because she had no one else.





CHAPTER II.

BERTHA'S WISH.



It was one night after they had been to visit the kind old German lady, their mother's friend, that this wonderful wish came into Berty's heart.

Madame Hansmann, as this old lady was called by the people of Biddy's house, was not yet weaned from the dear *Vaterland*, as she called her native country, and liked nothing so well as talking of its kindly ways and pleasant customs to any one who would listen. She knew no English; but the homely German, which, I dare say, sounds harsh and unpleasant enough to you, was music in Bertha's ears; for it was the language in which she had always heard her mother speak. Berty had, too, or fancied she had, a dim remembrance of some of the scenes which the good old lady described, especially of the Christmas trees, and birthday feasts, and

the concerts in the *Volksgarten*, or public park, of the city where her parents had lived.

It was, as I said, one night after a visit to old Madame Hansmann that Berty's wish came into her heart. She was sitting in her attic, striving patiently, by the light of a candle-end which Biddy had given her, to fashion a frock for little Fritz from an old one of her own. She was not a very skilful seamstress, and her materials were none of the best; so, as you may imagine, she was much too busy at first to pay much attention to the children's chatter, as they frolicked and tumbled upon the old straw bed in the corner. Presently, however, having planned out her work to her mind, her attention was attracted by their talk.

"Wasn't it nice," said Lina, "what she told about the Christmas trees? And Berty's seen one; but we never did."

"Poh!" cried Gottlieb, turning a very contemptuous somerset; "poh! *I* have: but I never told though before. It was last Christmas,—that night, you know, I ran away from Bert. We went to the avenue, Martin Fi-

scher and me, and we saw one. It was in that big stone house where the Dutchman lives — Herr Westermann. It was very cold, and we stood upon the sidewalk, and the wind blew so hard; but the blinds were open just a bit, and we saw it! O my! — but wasn't it jolly! The great green tree most up to the top of the wall; and the lights blazing on every limb; and the gold and silver nuts shining; and the apples and oranges and candy! — and O, flowers, too! and hobby-horses! and dolls! — and all the children dancing round and laughing! I tell *you*, you never saw anything so fine, — never! never!"

"Did you see the Christ-child, Lieb?" asked little Rosa, in a tone of awe.

"I saw a little blue angel with gold wings, quite up in the top of the tree," answered Gottlieb; "only its face was turned the other way."

"*That* was He!" cried Rosa, clapping her hands joyfully. "*That* was He! O how I wish I could see Him! Mina Schaeffer says it is He brings all the things, — only she says he will never come to us, because we are

poor, — and it is only the rich ones He takes them to.”

“ Fie, Rosa,” said Lina, reprovingly ; “ don’t you remember what *die liebe Mutter* said, how Jesus (He’s the Christ-child, you know) was very poor, and how the Holy Virgin laid Him in a manger when He was born. I don’t believe *He* would forget us because we are poor.”

“ Will He come, then, do you think ? ” asked Rosa, eagerly. “ Will He come this Christmas, if we are very good ? Perhaps we were naughty last year, — I don’t remember, — and *die Mutter* said He don’t love us but when we are good. Let’s be *very* good now, and see if He will come.”

“ I don’t believe it is the Christ-child does it,” said Gottlieb, who had been lying quite still, thinking, for some time. “ I don’t believe it is the Christ-child does it at all. Mina Schaeffer knows nothing, and the little blue angel looked just like a doll. I’ll bet you it was Herr Westermann bought all those things, and Frau Westermann put them on the tree ; — only she’s a little woman, I know, and the tree was very high. But, any way,

I don't believe it's the Christ-child does it. Martin says it isn't. They had a tree to Martin's house once, and he peeped, and he thought he saw his mother; but then their tree was little, and Herr Westermann's was ever so big."

"Perhaps Frau Westermann had a ladder," said Lina, coming to her brother's assistance in his puzzle.

"A ladder! to be sure, so she must!" cried Gottlieb, much relieved. "Yes, you may be certain she had a ladder."

"But the tree," put in little city-bred Rosa; "where would he get the tree?"

"Pshaw, stupid!" answered her brother, impatiently; "don't the trees grow, and couldn't he cut one and bring it home on a dray?"

"But wouldn't the policeman catch him then?" asked poor puzzled Rosa, whose only idea of trees was of those in the city parks.

"But, Rosa, there are woods," explained Lina, — "great fields full of nothing but trees, — that's in the country. Mina Schaeffer went there once to visit her cousin, and she told me. People may cut them if they like, and there are no policemen; only I don't

think Herr Westermann could bring one on a dray because it is so far, Lieb. I'll tell you, though: I think they bring them on the railroad to the markets, and then the people can buy them. I saw some once — very tall and full of green prickles, and Biddy said they were for Christmas trees. I guess Herr Westermann bought his, Lieb."

"Well, perhaps he did," answered Lieb, sleepily; "and a ladder, — O yes, a ladder! You may be sure it's the father and mother do it, Lina."

"And we have no father — no mother," said Rosa, with a sigh. "We have nobody, — at least we have only Bert."

"And Bert could not make a Christmas tree," added Lina, sadly.

"Yes, Bert *tould*!" cried little Fritz, giving Lina a vigorous punch with his stout little fist. Fritz had been lying broad awake listening to all this wonderful talk without understanding it in the least; but he firmly believed that his Bert could do anything, and so he felt bound to defend her from Lina's assertions. "I tell 'ou," said he, "Bert *tould*, — Bert *tould* had a laddy and

make a kissmas tee for Fitzy, and the bu andel tould hep her."

It was just here, at these words of little Fritz's, that the wonderful wish came into Bertha's heart, and set it throbbing, so that the poor child forgot all about her troublesome work, — noticed no longer the children's talk, or the waning candle; but just sat with her hands clasped in her lap, till the children were fast asleep and the candle quite burnt out, thinking and thinking; then crept away to her place by Fritz's side, and lay awake far into the night, thinking and thinking still.

Perhaps you can guess now what was Bertha's wish; at least, if you cannot, you must be almost as stupid as was Gottlieb with his ladder.





CHAPTER III.

“HOW TO DO IT.”



AS the days passed, and Christmas-tide drew nearer, Berty's wish gained fuller and fuller possession of her childish heart. To get a Christmas tree for these poor little children, who had no father or mother, who had “only Bert,” — to make them for once perfectly happy, as happy as rich Herr Westermann's boys and girls, — and to do this all herself, — how delightful, and yet how impossible the project seemed.

How bright and cheerful the old garret would appear, lighted up by the glories of such a tree as the Westermann's, for Bertha's dim German recollections were wonderfully freshened by Gottlieb's descriptions; how her mother would smile from her sweet rest in Paradise upon the little pale girl to whose feeble care she had, with such a failing heart, committed her little ones;

how sweetly her father would sleep in his bed there under the sea, if he knew how happy his darlings were made.

Then the gifts, too. Oh, how Berty's imagination revelled in those gifts! Of course, there must be the blazing tapers, and the gold and silver nuts, and the apples, and oranges, and candy; but there must be also — what? — ah, a little cart for Fritzzy, and — oh yes, a whole row of pewter soldiers, and a whistle, and a rattle; — only think of a baby who had never had a rattle! Then there must be a doll for Rosa, and perhaps a cradle to rock it in; and Lieb must have a drum, for he so dearly loves to make a noise, and perhaps a tin sword too, and a soldier's cap; — then he might "train" with the other boys upon the street, perhaps even be Captain of a Company: how Lieb would like that! And Lina must have a set of dishes, for Lina was such a tidy little housekeeper she would be sure to like that best of all. And Berty — ah! Berty would have *done it*; surely, that would be fun enough: Berty was the little mother; surely, that was joy enough for her.

O yes! it was easy enough to arrange all that; it was easy enough to think *what* to get; but *how* to get it — that was quite another thing. So, whenever this troublesome question came up, Berty was fain, for a long time, to put it out of her head. But at last the simple child bethought herself that this question, “How to do it,” was by far the most important question of the two. If the Christmas tree was ever to be anything more than a beautiful dream, this question must be settled first of all. And so she set herself resolutely to consider it.

The fairy godmother of Mrs. Flanagan’s tales was, as I said, the first thought; but Bertha, having been born in Germany, instead of Ireland, could never feel quite certain that she had a fairy godmother. Biddy, to whom she applied in her perplexity, knew nothing about German fairies; she could only speak confidently about the “good little people” of her own green island, who were but too fond of children, as she knew; for had not her own husband’s first cousin had a child carried off by them, changed in its cradle for a fairy babe, — a strange little

being, which never grew older or larger, but remained always a merry, silly child. Bertie did not like this view of the subject at all: but for the Christmas tree, she would have been relieved to know that there was no such person about, for she had no mind to have her Fritzzy exchanged for any fairy folk. Ah, if she would but bring the Christmas tree, and then fly away, and never, never, come back any more! But, even if she had such a guardian, how could she be sure that it had not been left in the "old country," along with the rest of their household treasures: the donkey, the goat, the pet kid, the pink china shepherdess, the painted tea-set, and the great old pewter tankard, which she dimly remembered.

Again she applied to Biddy:—did fairies ever emigrate? "Whisht, child!" answered Mrs. Flanagan; "how can I tell? Sure, the fairy folk are very wise, and is it likely they'd fash themselves with crossing the salt wather? And Ameriky's but a wild counthry, wid snakes, and bears, and Injuns,—not tame and tidy like ould Ireland; and the weeny people could never bide in cities.

They must have their green rings to dance upon, and all that. Troth, though, I *did* see a place in the park whin we wint there the day, so trim and green I tould Mike it looked a likely spot for the good folk; but thin there's the p'leecemen. Whisht, child, how can *I* tell? And why need ye be talkin' so much of them? Sure, Berty, they don't like it; and it's not good to vex them.”

So at last, all things considered, Bertha came to the conclusion that this fairy god-mother was much too uncertain a personage to be trusted with such an important and difficult matter as her Christmas tree. But she could not manage alone,—how could she? It was almost impossible for her, with all the help she had from the kind world, to get food enough for all those children to eat, and clothing enough for them to wear: how could she, whose only living was gained by picking up what other people threw away as worthless, hope to indulge in this luxury of giving, which few of the people around her, so much better off than herself, could afford? No, she could never do it

alone. Who then would help her? Not Biddy: she was much too poor and too busy to bother herself with such a matter. Not Madame Hansmann: she might be willing, but her cross, beer-drinking son, with whom she lived, and of whom she stood in such terror that she never permitted the children to come to her except when he was absent, would never allow it. Who, then, would help her? She had no one else.

"No one else!" It was to this sad conclusion of all her hopes and schemes that Berty had come upon the evening when my story begins, when she sat by the window, looking up at the dull rainy sky. It was this dreary thought which made her turn back, with such a weary sigh, to her unpleasant work at Gottlieb's summons. Poor Berty! the rags had never seemed so filthy, the bits of iron never so rusty, the whole basket of odds and ends never so worthless, as they did that night. She had no sympathy with Gottlieb's rejoicing over his two horse-shoes, no patience with Lina's lingering over the bits of an illustrated newspaper; and, when she crept into her bed

in the darkness, after Gottlieb had returned from his nightly chaffer with "Moses," the *Vaterunser* was, I am sorry to say, forgotten.

"No one else!" What was it, then, that put into Berty's mind, as she lay there awake in the darkness, brooding over her fruitless plans, the remembrance of that old talk of the children which had given rise to them? What was it made her recall that sweet thought of little Rosa's, that it was the Christ-child brought the gifts, — or that still sweeter faith of Lina's, that JESUS would never forget them because they were poor. What was it? Oh, my children! rather, *Who* was it? Who but that Friend, the best and dearest Who watches over us all, even while we forget Him, and showers upon us new blessings, even while we are unthankful for those He has already sent.

JESUS would not forget them: they had no father, no mother; but they still had Him. I cannot tell you with what a flash of joy and hope this thought filled little Bertha's lonely heart. I suppose you could never fully understand it until, like Bertha,

you had "no one else"; which, God grant, may never be your case; for it is a hard trial, this having no one else, though it is an inestimable blessing to have Him. And so Berty found it when she rose from her bed, and, kneeling once more by the window, with her face turned toward the sky, laid all her cares and hopes and wishes at His feet.

And I cannot think that Berty was wrong or foolish in this, even though her trouble was about such a little thing; for I am sure that He who cares for the sparrows, and who has provided so many beautiful things for us to enjoy, cares even for our slightest pleasures, and helps us to gain them when they are right.





CHAPTER IV.

LITTLE MARY'S HOME.



UPON that same October evening, another little girl, near Bertha's age, sat by the window, looking out into the twilight.

It was no dreary back-court, however, which met her eye, but a broad, well-paved street, lined with stately houses, and a quiet park, where the graceful willows drooping round the fountain still showed a tinge of green, and the elms and maples still looked gay in their autumn livery of crimson and gold.

And the scene within presented as strong a contrast to poor Bertha's surroundings as did the scene without. The cheerful parlor, with its rich curtains and soft carpet, its glowing grate and pleasant pictures and comfortable easy-chairs, was very unlike that dismal attic; but the gazer at the window

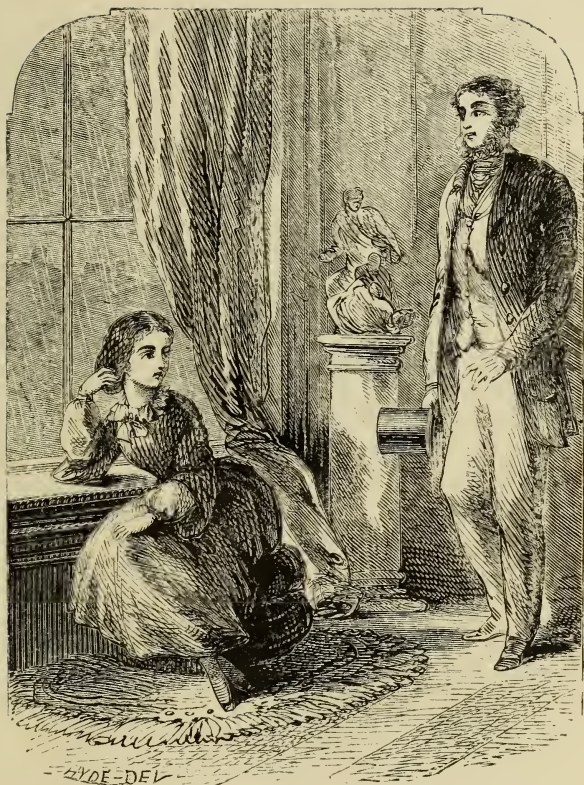
seemed to give very little heed to its brightness. She, too, was looking up at the cloudy sky, and, with her pale little face and deep mourning - dress, made as sad a picture through the plate-glass window as did poor ragged Bertha behind her smoky panes.

Presently, however, as a footstep sounded along the pavement and up the steps, the pale, sad face lighted up and turned eagerly toward the door. A handsome, merry-looking, young gentleman came briskly in, shaking a tiny shower of rain-drops from his hair and dress. "Were you counting the rain-drops, Polly?" said he, "or looking for the moon?"

"No, cousin John; I was only thinking."

"*Only* thinking!" said cousin John, wheeling the most inviting easy-chair up in front of the glowing grate. "Well, come here and sit with me, and, if you must stare at something, let it be at the fire: it is a much more agreeable object than that mizzly sky. And so you were thinking, Polly? I hoped you were watching for me."

"I was wishing for you, cousin John. But I wasn't exactly watching, because I



was thinking of *them*;"—and the child clasped her hands nervously, and turned her face up to him with a sorrowful look, which was sadder than tears.

A shadow came over the young man's pleasant face; and he stooped and kissed her forehead, as he placed her on his knee. "You shouldn't sit here alone in the twilight, Polly," said he; "it's not good for you. Where are the babies?"

"Grandmamma does not like them to stay in the parlor, you know: they make such a litter; and she wants it tidy when you come home; and Mrs. Evans says I sha'n't be always in the nursery."

"Grandmamma mustn't sacrifice you to my old-bachelor notions, puss. I had rather stumble over a dozen hobby-horses than to find my little Polly sitting here alone with such a dismal face."

"*I* like it to be neat for you, too, cousin John," said cousin John's little Polly, as he drew the kind caressing arm closer round her; "and I don't think Grandmamma would have made the rule; but the last time they were in here, Jamie got the poker, and rode upon

it all round the room. He called it his gee-gee. Look, what a black mark he made in the carpet. Nancy scrubbed it ever so long this morning, and it won't come out; and the black was all over his new scarlet frock, too. Then Jeannie climbed on a chair, to get the dollies, — she thinks those marble busts are dollies, — and she fell and bumped her head. Mrs. Evans says it will be black and blue for a month. Oh, how angry she was! She said they were spoiled. Sylvie never said so; and Sylvie let me stay with them as much as I liked. Poor Sylvie!" — and the child's voice sank into a tone of sad complaint.

"Mrs. Evans is a bit of a tyrant, I know," answered cousin John, cheerfully; "but she is very fond of the twins, and of their big sister too, I can tell you. But where's Grandmamma to-night?"

"Aunt Emily came and took her home to tea. She asked me, too; but, oh, cousin John, they do pity me so much, and ask so many questions about *it*, — all those old ladies, — that I can't bear it. But she said you were to come, and I was to tell you the

instant you came in, but I forgot. Shall you go?"

"Shall I, Polly? I leave you to decide."

Oh, cousin! will you? And may I tell you to stay? I want you so much: only I don't wish to be selfish; and aunt Emily said you and Grandmamma were dreadfully moped with us children."

"Are we?" said cousin John, smiling. "I'm much obliged to aunt Emily; I never should have guessed it without her help. I thought it was very nice to have a little Polly to welcome me home every evening, and to be company for Grandmamma all day; and I am sure the house was never so lively as it is since Jemmy and Jenny came. I should have said, now, if any one had asked me, that it was aunt Emily's tea-parties which moped us; but then, of course, she knows."

"I don't believe you are moped at all," said Polly, energetically; "you are always so bright and merry, or, when you are sad, it is not in a stupid way. I wonder at you sometimes, cousin John. You are just like me, — that is, I mean you have no father

and mother; and you have not even the twins;—you have only Grandma in all the world, and yet you seem so happy, while I can do nothing but cry.”

“*Only* Grandmamma! Why, Polly, I should not be so very poor in friends, even if you were right. Grandma counts for a great deal with her Johnny, I can tell you. But I thought myself richer than that. I thought I had you, my little cousin, and the twins. Don’t you mean to give me any share in the twins?”

“Oh, cousin John! I didn’t mean *that*!” cried the little girl, very earnestly. “I’m sure I love you better than anybody in the world,—at least now,—and Jemmy and Jenny are always calling for ‘Cuddy.’ They never call papa or brother now; and nurse won’t let me put them in mind, because she says it does them no good and only makes me cry. Oh no! I did not mean that. I meant people that belong to you,—people that you have a right to.”

“And I insist that I have a right to you, Polly,” said the young gentleman, pressing Polly very tight in his arms. “But I know

what you mean, puss, and I won't tease you any more. Indeed, I have been wishing to talk with you a little about this for some time; and, now we have begun it, perhaps I had better say my say. I know very well how sad it is to be an orphan, and I have seen the time, at first, when, like you, I could do nothing but cry; so, I don't mean to set myself up for an example; but, my little Mary, there is one thing which you and I must both remember, and which ought to help us very much, and that is this: whatever our trials are, they are sent by One who knows much better than we do what is good for us, and for those we love; and whatever our blessings are, they come to us straight from His hand. If we believe this,—as I try to do, as I hope you also try to do,—it will make us afraid to murmur at the one, and ashamed to be unthankful for the other,—will it not?"

"Perhaps so; I suppose it ought," said Mary, slowly; "but, oh, cousin John, it is so very hard. You are a man, and you are so very good you would be sure to feel just right; but I am only a little girl, and it is

so very hard, so very different. You and Grandma are very kind, but, oh, I want papa so much, and mamma, and Ned! Oh, cousin, you don't know! It seems sometimes as if my heart would break!" — and the child leaned her head against her cousin's shoulder, and wept as if her heart were really breaking.

The young man soothed her very tenderly, and waited patiently until her tears were dried; then he said, gently, "My darling must not think I mean to blame her, but only to help her bear her trouble better. I know it is sad, very sad, to lose so many dear friends at one blow; but Polly must count up her blessings as well as her trials: she has not been left quite helpless and friendless, as so many poor children are, by this same fearful Providence."

"That is what nurse is always saying," answered Mary, a little impatiently; "but I can't see that it makes my trial any easier. I'm sure it only makes me more wretched to think of other people being so miserable."

"I suppose it does have that effect," answered cousin John, thoughtfully, "unless

one tries to help them. Yes, Polly, strange as it may seem, the only way to lighten our own burdens is by helping other people to bear theirs."

There was not a shadow of vexation in his tone; and yet, somehow, Mary could not help feeling that her cousin was not quite pleased with her, — perhaps because she was not quite pleased with herself. She was conscious of being unthankful for her remaining blessings; she knew she had felt inclined to murmur at her lot, and to indulge her grief without any regard to the comfort of those around her. But she felt she had great excuse, — as, indeed, she had, if any one can be said to have excuse for doing what is not quite right; for this little Mary's trials were no common ones.

I dare say my young readers have already guessed that Mary was an orphan, but I hope they are not familiar enough with sorrow to have guessed in what a terrible form her bereavement came. Perhaps some of you may remember, however, to have heard or read of the fearful pestilence at Norfolk in Virginia, a few years ago, when the yellow

fever passed through the city and carried off its victims from every house. It was at Norfolk that little Mary's parents lived; and it was this terrible disease which had robbed her, in a single week, of her father, her mother, her eldest brother, and Sylvie, her faithful black nurse. Poor little Mary! well might she shudder and turn pale as she remembered that fearful day when she found herself alone with the twin babies, with only those strange doctors and nurses to care for them. Well might she cling, too, to the dear cousin who had braved the pestilence to come to their relief.

The grandmother's house was of course open to the orphans. They had already been with her two months when my story begins, and the twin babies had become quite wonted to their new nursery, grown very fond of "ganny," as they called her, very familiar with "Cuddy," as they styled young Dr. Grey, and seemed to have adopted Nurse Evans into the place of their lost Sylvie; but little Mary was still, I am sorry to say, not only very sad but very discontented. She had taken up a sad complaining way, brooding over her grief, and refus-

ing to be comforted ; contrasting her grandmother's quiet, sober ways with her mamma's sweet brightness, and Mrs. Evans's strictness with poor Sylvie's indulgence.

Dr. John was the only person who could soothe or divert her ; for she chose to believe that he, an orphan himself, left from childhood to his grandmother's care, was the only one who could fully sympathize with her great trouble. She was very fond of him ; and now, though a little vexed at his seeming reproof, could not bear the thought of displeasing him : so, after a moment's thought, she took his hand caressingly in both her own, and said, " I am so little, cousin John, and so silly, I don't see how I could help other people any ; but if you want me to, I'll try, — only you must tell me how."

" I'll tell you how I learned what little I know about it, Polly," answered Dr. Grey, kindly. " When I first came here, it was with me, I suppose, very much as it is with you now. I pined for the dear ones I had lost, and found this great empty house very lonely and dreary. I thought no one had ever been so afflicted as I, and I indulged

my grief without giving a thought to other people's feelings, until, one night, Grandma and I sat here in this very parlor. I was moping by the window, just as you were when I came in. I thought of that night when I saw you here, looking so doleful; and dear Grandma sat by the fire with her knitting in her lap. She was not so old a woman as now by a good many years, but she seemed to me every whit as aged; and I confess I thought it something of a bore that there should be no younger people in the house. She had been trying hard to wile me into a little cheerful talk, but I was obstinate; so she had finally given it over, and sat there thinking, with her hands folded over the work in her lap. I don't know what prompted me to peep out at her from my sullen nook in the window-seat, but I did, and I never shall forget the weary, sorrowful, jaded look upon that dear old face. Perhaps you have seen it, Polly; it has come back once or twice since you came. It came over me all at once then, that I was not the only sufferer; that, if I had lost my parents, dear Grandma had lost her only son; if I was lonely in my orphan

childhood, she must be still more so in her widowed age; and that I, who should have been her comfort, was adding to her trouble by my selfish grief. I can't tell you how I felt, Mary; but I remember I jumped from the window-seat, and sat down upon the footstool at Grandma's feet, and leaned my head against her knee. The kind old smile came back then, and I made a great vow to myself to keep it there. I have tried; I don't know if I have succeeded always; but one thing I do know, Polly: I have never felt myself quite desolate since that night. I have never wished for any one younger than Grandma either; and I hope, I believe, I have filled, in some measure, the place of the son she then lost. But the dear old patient heart has got a fresh wound now, Polly: she has lost a daughter now; another orphan grandchild is weeping in her home; and the old look of sadness and weariness has come back. I can't banish it alone this time, Polly. Will you help me?"

"Oh, I know what you mean!" cried Mary, bursting into tears; "I know what you mean. I have seen the look. It was on her face to-

night, when I would not go with her, and aunt Emily would insist upon taking her away. But I did not mind it as you did. I never thought she could care so much for mamma; but I see now: if I had died, dear mamma would have been so sad, so sorry. Yes, I *will* try, cousin John,— I *will*!”

“I knew you would, my darling; and, I am sure, Grandma will be very happy in her little daughter.”

“Her little daughter,” repeated Polly, drying her eyes, and brightening up, as if that put the subject in a new light. “That is like being your little sister, isn’t it? I like that.”

“Yes,” said Dr. John, “my little sister,— Grandma’s boy and girl. I like it too, Polly, very much.”

“We’ll be ever so good, won’t we? But, cousin John, you’ve only told me about Grandmamma, and you said there were others. How did you learn to help the others?”

“I haven’t done learning that yet, Polly; so we can study together, and, if we have but the motive, I dare say we shall find a way to

lighten the burden of many a weary fellow-traveller."

"What is the motive, cousin John?"

Dr. John made no answer to this question in words; but he took his grandmother's great Bible from the stand beside him, and turning over the leaves, put his finger on a passage, and held it up to the fire-light for Polly to read. The child made out the words slowly by the flickering light: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto ME"; then looked up in his face and asked, in a frightened tone, "Do you think He really meant *that*, cousin John?"

"We have His own Word for it, Polly," answered Dr. John; "and is not that motive enough? Is there anything, *anything*, we should not be willing to do for Him?"





CHAPTER V.

“WHOSE LOST HAVE I FOUND?”



BERTY rose next morning with the firm belief that her wish was to be granted, though in what way she could not tell. She was not so unreasonable as to expect the coveted pleasure to fall from the sky in answer to her prayers, however; and so she could not help feeling some curiosity about the means by which it was to come to her. Was it to be given her, or was she to be helped to earn it? The first plan seemed very unlikely, for she knew no one who had both the means and the will to do so much for her; and the second seemed, at first thought, more unlikely still, but she was fain to settle upon it at last, as being the more probable of the two. Yes: she would be very diligent in her work; and who knew but she might find something very valuable in the gutter, or do some great

service to the people at the crossing, and so get money enough.

But how much money would it take, was another question, and a very puzzling question to poor Bertha, whose acquaintance with the prices current was very slight indeed. In this emergency she applied once more to Mrs. Flanagan. “Biddy, how much does a Christmas tree cost? Do you know?”

“A Christmas tree! Faix, Berty, what a child ye are for axin’ questions! Sure they don’t be havin’ such toys in ould Ireland; and I niver bought one. Pounds and pounds, I suppose; but your Dutch folks be talkin’ of thim so much, they’d be liker to know than I.”

“And how many cents is in a pound, Mrs. Flanagan?”

“How many cints? Sure, child, I niver reckoned. There’s betune four and five dollars, I know; but I niver could remember rightly how much, to a penny,—the money’s so bothersome in this counthry.”

“And there’s one hundred cents in a dollar, I know: Tim Daly told me,” pursued Berty. “Pounds and pounds; and four hun-

dred cents to a pound. Oh, dear! oh, dear! Mrs. Flanagan, do you think I could ever earn so much?"

"Hear till the child now! Is she crazy, d'ye think?" cried Biddy, in amazement. "Sure, you're niver thinkin' of buyin' a Christmas tree! you, that haven't shoes to yer feet, nor clothes to yer back, nor food to yer stomach!"

Poor Berty! the good Irishwoman's words fell upon her heart with a heavier weight than even the "pounds and pounds"; but she would not wait to hear more, — she *would* not be talked out of her project at the very beginning, — so she caught up her broom and her basket, and scampered away as fast as her bare little feet could carry her.

Once safe round the corner, out of reach of Mrs. Flanagan's astonished gaze, Bertha began to walk slower, and to revolve again in her mind that weary question of ways and means, which has puzzled so many wiser heads than hers. It was so hard to settle what to do; some adviser she must have; but who? She could not consult with her little prime minister, Gottlieb, for the project would lose

half its charm if it were not to be a surprise to him. She thought of her Dutch acquaintance; doubtless they would know all about it; but she remembered Biddy's amazement, and she had no mind to encounter a second edition of that. No; she wanted no prudent old heads shaking themselves so provokingly over her wild plan. What she wanted, after all, was some one to sympathize rather than advise.

"The top o' the morning to ye, Berty," cried a pleasant, cheery voice, breaking in upon her meditations; and her heart leapt within her at the sound of the merry brogue, and the sight of the round, rosy face of the little speaker. Here was just the adviser she wanted. Tim Daly, her master in the rag-picker's arithmetic, her protector in all her street troubles, — honest, merry, wise, kind-hearted, blundering Tim, who always looked upon the bright side of everything, who always had a word of encouragement for everybody, — who could be a better confidant than he?

So she turned upon the young Irishman a brighter glance of welcome even than he

was accustomed to get. "Oh, I *so* glad to see you, Tim!" said she. "You're just the very one I wanted."

"Well, it's good to be welcome, any way," said Tim, who cared more for Berty's smiles than he would have been willing to confess. "It's good to be welcome. An' what were ye wanting of me, Berty?"

"I'll tell you, Tim," answered Berty, eagerly. "I've got such a wonderful plan; and I can't tell Gottlieb, you see, because it's part to be for him; and I want somebody to talk it over with; and you're better than any one."

"Am I, though?" asked Tim, straightening himself up grandly. "You're the *broth* of a boy, Berty." Tim thought it very nice to be better than any one to Berty, you see; and as for Berty herself, she seemed quite contented to be called the "broth of a boy," though it certainly sounded very much as if Tim was a cannibal, and not a very good judge of child-soup at that.

"Yes Tim," said she, "you are, — because you've some sense, and you won't fly out at one like Mrs. Biddy, I know."

“I’ll never fly out at you, Berty, that’s sure,” said Tim, confidently.

“Well, then, you see, it’s just this:— There’s those poor children,— Lieb, and Lina, and Rose. They were so little when we came from the old country,— and Fritzzy, he wasn’t born,— and none of them ever saw a Christmas tree in all their lives;”— and Berty held her breath here, as if she had made a very astonishing statement.

“No more have I,” said Tim; “but that’s nayther here nor there, Berty. Go on.”

“Didn’t you?” said Berty, casting a pitying glance up at the merry face beside her, and mentally fastening a present for Tim upon the green branches of her imaginary tree. “Well, neither did they; and Madame Hansmann, you see, has told them about it, and their heads are full of it. I heard them the other night talking, and wishing, and they said they could not have it because they had no father, no mother,— nobody but Bert. And oh, Tim, I promised mother to do *everything* for those children; and I wish so much, so very much, to do

this. Oh, Tim, do you think I could? and will you help me?" finished up poor Berty, in a choking voice.

"'Deed an' I will, Berty," cried Tim, with an encouraging slap upon Berty's shoulder; "and ov course ye can do it. Sure, I've got fifty cints that I was laying by for the winter shoes; but what's shoes to a Christmas tree? Sure, we'll get it betune us, Berty. Don't ye cry; we'll get it, sure as fate."

This was rather more help than Berty had bargained for. She did not at all like the notion of robbing Tim of his shoes; for, if the truth must be told, she was much more tender of Tim's feet than of her own.

"Oh no, Tim," said she, earnestly; "I did not mean *that*. I don't want you to help me with money, for I mean to earn it all myself; and I have prayed, and I know that the Christ-child (that's Jesus, you know) will help me. I'm going to look sharp in the gutters, and I shall find heaps of things; or else I shall do something for the passengers, and they'll pay me ever so much. I'm not afraid about the money; but you see I'm not wise, — I can't count much. Will

you help me count the pennies, when I get them, and keep them for me till we get enough,—so Lieb shall not guess,—and go with me to buy the tree and things, so the market-men and the toy-sellers shall not cheat me. Only there's one thing I want to buy all myself, and you mustn't look then. Will you, Tim?”

“Yes,” said Tim, who had a famous project in his head of counting his own pennies in with Berty's, and never telling her; “yes, Berty, I'll do everything you ask me,—certain sure.”

“Then it's all settled,” cried Berty, with a long sigh of satisfaction, the tapers of her Christmas tree shining brightly in her mind's eye as she spoke,—“quite settled at last. And, Tim, here's my crossing, and yonder's yours; and you'll see—you'll see what a pile of pennies I'll have to-night!”

“Well; good luck to you, Berty,” answered Tim, and scampered off.

If you had been near to watch little Berty that morning, I am sure you would have thought her the most industrious little rag-picker in all New York. She turned over

very carefully the sweepings of the shops, ransacked all the rubbish in the gutters, and swept patiently at her crossing, keeping a sharp eye to the passengers meanwhile, for any chance to do them service ; and yet, when she sat down, quite tired out, upon the curbstone to eat her crust at noon, she had in her basket only the usual amount of cabbage-stumps, and rags, and rusty nails, and in her pocket only the two pennies which a pleasant-looking gentleman had tossed her as he stepped out of the stage at the crossing.

It was very discouraging. And Tim, too, who scarcely ever failed to come round now and then for a bit of friendly chat, had never been near her all day. Berty was almost glad, since she had nothing to show him ; and yet it gave her a forsaken feeling, which, added to the discouragement, almost made her cry.

By and by a drizzly rain came on, soaking her thin garments, chilling her blood, and making the bright tapers of the imaginary tree look very dim and distant through its dismal mist. Yet Berty would not allow herself to lose heart entirely : this was a

famous time for the crossing, if only people would not be in such a hurry; for everybody was crowding to the stages to escape the rain. Perhaps, if she kept it very neat, so that the ladies should not soil their fine dresses, nor the gentlemen their shining boots, some of them might be grateful enough to fling her now and then a penny; and Berty did not think a penny so small now as she had done in the morning. At any rate she would try.

So she took her broom and swept away vigorously; and, sure enough, the pennies did come, one after another, ringing down upon the clean pavement, till Berty had counted ten; and then along came her pleasant-looking gentleman of the morning, and he tossed her a dime, with such a cheery smile, too, that Berty's heart quite glowed within her, and the tapers shone out again brighter than ever.

But what was this which came tumbling down upon the pavement as the loaded stage rolled off, — not ringing at all, but with a heavy thump? Berty picked it up. A pocket-book of purple Russia leather, very

fat and full. Whose could it be? The pleasant-looking gentleman's? Very likely; for Berty remembered that he was the last to step upon the platform. So she held it up and shouted, and ran after the stage a moment; but nobody heeded, and she could never overtake it, that was certain. What should she do? Give it to the policeman? Doubtless he knew where the gentleman lived; policemen knew everything. Berty looked round, but, for a wonder, there was no policeman near. What should she do then? Take it to the station-house, or wait till the stage came down again and hand it to the conductor? He knew the gentleman, for she had seen them nod to each other. But what if he should not give it up; what, if he should keep it?

"*Keep it!*" What was there in that thought to make Berty's heart beat so, and her head grow giddy? What was there to make her clinch the pocket-book tighter, and hide it in her dress, and glance round to see if any one was looking? Was it a good angel, think you, that whispered in Berty's ear at this moment — "*Keep it!*" If any one

is to keep it, why not you? You did not see him lose it; how do you know to whom it belongs? You found it in the street; and what is found in the street belongs to the sweepers. And you prayed, too; how can you tell but this is an answer to your prayer? It is a good fat one. Surely, it holds enough to buy a Christmas tree. Look at it and see if it does not.”

It might have been an angel; very likely it was; but, truly, I think such angels are very poor help in growing Christmas trees.





CHAPTER VI.

TIM TURNS POLICEMAN.



TIM came back to the crossing towards night, his round face rosier and merrier than ever, and a new little splint basket on his arm, which Berty would have wondered over at any other time, but did not notice now. She sat upon the curb-stone with her basket beside her, and her hands folded in her lap, thinking as intently as on the night when we found her at the attic window. But there was a flush on her face, and a strange look of care in her eyes, for which Tim could not account, and which he thought boded little good to the wished-for tree. Still, Tim thought he carried the cure for all such trouble in his breeches' pocket, if he could but get Berty to take it. So he began, cautiously, "Well, Berty, so you're waiting, for me; how goes it?"

The child turned and looked at him vacantly, but did not answer. "Bad enough?" said 'Tim, sitting down beside her. "Well, honey, never mind. You'll let yer own Tim help ye, sure ye will. An' he's a rich man the night. Faix, it's not a rag-picker he is at all any more, but an apple-boy; hooroo! Whist, Berty," he added, as the girl started nervously at this outburst. "Whist, Berty, an' I'll tell ye. I had a bright thought whin I left ye the morn; an' I just scampered home an' tuk the fifty cints from the ould stockin' fut, where uncle Teddy bade me keep 'em; an' I wint to the market an' bought this tidy basket, d'ye see? an' filled it wid apples from a stall; an' then I wint down to the ferry an' sold 'em. And whin the apples were all gone, I filled it wid oranges; an' whin the oranges were gone, I filled it wid chestnuts; an' whin the chestnuts was gone, I filled it wid pennies, d'ye see?" — and, suiting the action to the word, Tim poured a jingling stream of pennies from his pocket into the basket.

"There, darlint," said he, coaxingly, placing the basket upon Berty's knee. "There, dar-

lint, ye won't mourn for yer luck now any more. Ye'll just let yer own Tim help ye. Sure, ye know, Berty, I've no one but meself to care for. Uncle Teddy's not dependant on me; an' you've all those childer;—so, it's only fair —”

“Tim,” said Berty, grasping the boy's arm, and speaking in a frightened whisper, “Tim, come with me. I want to show you something.”

Tim caught the basket as Berty heedlessly rose, and, without speaking, followed her — still holding his arm — down a neighboring alley. He had never seen his little friend look, or act, so strangely, and he was curious to know what it meant. When they came to a quiet, out-of-the-way spot, Berty stopped, and putting her hand in her bosom, drew out the pocket-book, and held it up before him, saying, still in the same frightened whisper, “There, Tim, see what I found!”

“A pocket-book! Oh, Berty, let's see!”

“Hush, Tim!” gasped Berty, “don't speak so loud; and here, come in the corner, behind this water-butt. Now, Tim, open it and count it, and tell me if there's enough.”

Tim took the book, and, loosening the elastic band, spread it out before them as they sat upon the sidewalk. The numerous red pockets were famously lined. There were rolls of bank-notes, drafts, checks, and in one little flapped pocket a handful of shining gold. "Why, Berty!" cried Tim, almost breathless with amazement, "*I* could never count it. It would take a bank-teller to do that. Sure, there's money enough to buy a dozen Christmas trees."

"Is there?" said Berty, clutching eagerly at it. "Is there? Then there's surely enough to buy one. Give it to me, Tim; let me put it away. Somebody'll be coming along."

Tim caught the grasping hand in one of his, and held the pocket-book firmly in the other. "Where did you get it, Berty?" he asked.

Berty's head drooped a little, and the color flushed up to her temples. "I told you, Tim," she answered: "I found it."

"Yes; but where?"

"In the street."

"And you don't know who it belongs to?"

“How should I?” said Bert, growing redder still, and wrenching impatiently at the detained little hand. “Give it to me, Tim; it’s mine.”

Tim looked gravely down at the pocket-book, which he had closed and fastened, and then back again at Bert’s face. The strange look there was getting a meaning in it which he did not like at all. “Bert,” said he, freeing her hand at last, and pointing with his finger to a row of gilt letters upon one side of the book, “do you see that? That’s the owner’s name and number. We’ve got to take this to the station. That’s all the business we’ve got with it.”

“You sha’n’t, Tim! It’s mine, I tell you! You’ve got no business with it at all. Give it here, I say!” cried Bert, snatching the pocket-book from his hand, and hiding it again in her bosom.

Tim made no attempt to recover it. He stood looking at Bert for a moment, with a mixture of grief and astonishment in his face, and then said, slowly, “Well, Bert Weissner, I never thought that of you, any way. It’s no better than stealing,—not a

bit. Oh, Berty! Oh, Berty! come wid it to the station. Come now! Sure, you wouldn't be a thief, I know. Come, Berty, come."

"I won't, Tim," cried Berty, passionately. "It's mine, I tell you! I found it in the street. What we find in the street is ours; you know it is. You are bad, Tim, you are cruel, to call me such names. I hate you! I won't stay to hear you!" and the child put both hands to her ears and ran away, with all the speed she could muster, towards her home.

Tim's first impulse, of course, was to run after her; so he followed, shouting to her to stop,—the pennies in his basket keeping up a jingling accompaniment to his cries and his pattering feet. Berty, however, paid no attention, but ran on and on, without looking round or slacking her pace, until she found herself safe in her attic, with the door closed and bolted against her pursuer.

Tim stopped at the foot of the garret-stairs, and sat down upon the lowest step, quite breathless with his chase. Uncle Teddy's room opened upon the same landing, and the merry little Irishman sat at the

door smoking his pipe in the twilight, and laughing heartily at his nephew's ill luck. "What's come to your sweetheart, Tim?" said he; "she tore up the stairs like mad."

"She is mad, I think," answered Tim, wiping his forehead, and looking ruefully up the stairs towards Bert's room.

"Well, leave her alone for a little, and she'll come to; it's the way of them all," counselled Uncle Teddy. "But what's that you have there, Tim?"

Tim looked down at his basket, and the ghost of a smile lighted up his face again. "It's pennies, Uncle," said he. "I've set up for an apple-boy the day; and see, I made all these from the fifty cints we laid by for the shoes. There's a dollar and ten cints."

"Is there though? Ye're a sharp lad, Tim. It's half as much as I've airned myself. Put it by and take care of it, lad. Well, I'm goin' out for a bit," he added, knocking the ashes from his pipe, "and ye can come wid me, if ye like, Tim,—just for once in a way."

"No, Uncle," said Tim; "I'll bide here, I think; I'm tired."

Very tired was Tim, and very sad, and sorely puzzled about what he was to do. There was his little venture, so successful, and yet so useless ; there was Berty, whom he loved better than all the world, hiding away from him, calling him cruel and declaring she hated him ; and there was the pocket-book, of which he felt himself become in some mysterious way the especial guardian, taken out of his reach. But, worse than all, harder than all, for poor, honest, warm-hearted Tim to bear, was the thought that this little Berty, whom he had first learned to love because she seemed so much better than other children, the remembrance of whose goodness and purity had kept him from many a boyish transgression, was going wrong, was setting her heart upon keeping what did not belong to her. Oh, if she would but heed him ! Oh, if she would but listen to reason ! Perhaps she would now ; perhaps she was cooler, and would talk the matter over. He could at least try. So he crept softly up the stairs to Berty's door. It was quite dark by this time, and all was quiet within. He put his lips to a

crack in the panel and called, "Berty! let me in. I want to spake wid ye." Then he laid his ear to the crack and listened, but heard no sound. She could not be asleep so soon. "Berty, honey!" he called again, coaxingly. "*Do* let me in."

"Go away, Tim," answered a hoarse whisper close to his ear. "Go away. You'll wake the children, and they must not know."

No, the children must *not* know. Tim agreed with her there. The children must never guess upon the brink of what a precipice their sister stood.

"Come out to me, then, Berty," he whispered, softly; "they'll not hear."

"No; go away. I'll not come out. You'll be trying to get it. Go away, I tell you."

"No, I won't," said Tim, earnestly. "I promise you I won't. I only want to talk a little. Come, now, — there's a dear girl, — come."

"I won't, I tell you," said Berty, decidedly. "I don't want to talk with you, Tim. You call me names. Go away."

Tim saw he was losing ground, for he knew from Berty's voice that she was getting

in a passion again; and of all things he dreaded that. What had come to his gentle Berty to get in a passion so easily? At any rate, they must part good friends, or he felt he had no chance left of winning her to a better mind.

"Berty," said he again, in his most persuasive tone, — "Berty dear, you're not vexed wid me? Say you're not."

"Go off, I say, Tim; go away."

"Say good night, then, Berty, and I'll go."

"Good night, Tim."

There was a shadow of relenting in the voice this time; and poor Tim was fain to carry off this drop of comfort in his heart without running the risk of losing it by staying longer: so he put his lips to the crack again, and whispered softly, "Good night, Berty dear;" then added, with a sudden impulse, "Say your prayers before you go to sleep," and ran away down-stairs again, to discuss with himself once more that momentous question — what to do.

One thing seemed plain, however, through all the puzzle: he must keep an eye on Berty so long as she had that pocket-book

in her possession, — to save her, if possible, from herself, and to guard this property which had been so strangely committed to his care. So he got his blanket from uncle Teddy's room, and curled himself up in it at the foot of the stairs. None of the lodgers, except Bert, came down that staircase; and she should never come down without his knowledge. So much was settled then. But what next? Should he send uncle Teddy to the station-house in the morning? The policemen would come then, perhaps, and drag poor Bert away to the tombs. Oh no, he could never do that! Bert would have a right to call him cruel, — she would have a right to hate him, if he did that. What then? Should he find out the stranger and let him know where his property was? Perhaps that would be best; perhaps the gentleman was a kind one, who would even give Bert something for keeping it safe.

But Bert would never let him see the pocket-book again, — never. Could he remember the number and the name? Ah, yes. "John Grey"; he had made that out quite distinctly; — that was the name. But about

the number he was not so sure; indeed he was not sure that he had read it at all; — he had only noticed something printed after the name, which he had taken for granted was a number. And now all at once it flashed upon him that it was not a number, but two letters — M. D. Yes, he saw it quite plainly with his mind's eye now, — “John Grey, M. D.” But what did M. D. mean? And how was he to find the gentleman if there was no number? Poor Tim! he was getting sorely puzzled and very sleepy; and so at last, lest he should forget them, he got upon his knees and murmured his *Ave Maria* and his *Pater-noster*, — and one little Irish-English prayer, which perhaps mounted higher than either, that the dear Jesu would watch over him and Berty, and keep them from evil, and help them to do right, and bring them safe out of their trouble at last; and then laid down again and fell asleep.

Yes, children, I am sorry to say Tim was a Papist, and knew no better than to pray to the Virgin, who, if she heard him, was doubtless more sorry than you or I can be; but Tim was an honest, faithful boy, who tried

with all his might to do his duty to God and his neighbor according to the light that was given him ; and therefore I have a great respect for those Latin prayers of his, which, little as he understood them, were doubtless more acceptable than many an English one which goes up from a less earnest heart.





CHAPTER VII.

ANOTHER CHASE.



F Tim had meant to revenge himself for all Berty's crossness, he could not have chosen any means more certain than his parting-words to do it. In the tumult of her thoughts, and her anxiety to get rid of Gottlieb's questions about the basket and broom, which in her haste she had left unheeded upon the sidewalk, Berty had hurried herself and the children into bed without remembering her usual devotions. But those words of Tim's, "Say your prayers before you go to sleep," brought the remembrance, and somehow it was strangely unwelcome. She sat down upon the bedside, after Tim was gone, to think it over. If the pocket-book had been sent, as she tried to persuade herself, in answer to her prayers, she ought at least to be willing to thank her Father in Heaven for such great and unexpected kind-

ness; and yet for her life she dared not have done it. If it was God's gift, it should fill her heart with love and thankfulness. Whence came, then, this anger and terror? Berty would not let herself understand, — would not allow herself to answer, — but crept into bed again with the *Vaterunser* still unsaid, though not forgotten.

But the sleep which settled so sweetly over Tim's hard couch held aloof from the straw bed in the attic. Berty tossed and tumbled in feverish unrest, — or lay in silent terror listening to the footsteps of the late lodgers coming in, and fancying they were policemen seeking for her, — or magnifying the rats in the ceiling into robbers, breaking in to steal her treasure. She tried to put the pocket-book out of her head, but it lay there like a leaden weight in her bosom, and would not be forgotten; she tried to think of her Christmas tree, but the shining tapers were all gone out and would not be re-lighted. The face of the strange gentleman would come up in their stead; but the cheery smile which had warmed her heart so, burned into it now like a red-hot iron. And Tim's

words, too,—those bad, cruel words, “It’s no better than stealing, not a bit; and you would not be a thief, Bert,”—came back again and again. And so the night wore on,—the most wretched night which, with all her troubles, poor Bert had ever known.

Towards morning she fell into an uneasy slumber, and dreamed that the strange gentleman, in a policeman’s dress, with the cheery smile still upon his face, hunted her up and down through crowded streets and lonely alleys, while Tim and all the people cried “Stop thief!” and woke to find it morning, and Lieb calling her to get up and asking again those weary questions about the basket and the broom.

She put him off with a story of Tim’s taking care of them, gave him his breakfast, and sent him away to his work; then dressed little Fritz, and, leaving Lina and Rose to take care of him and put the room to rights, started out, with not much notion where she was going,—only somewhere to get away from herself. Tim was waiting for her at the bottom of the stairs, with his new basket full of apples in one hand, and his own old

rag-basket and broom in the other. The faithful little sentinel had waked with the first peep of day, and gone out to the earliest market-stall to purchase his little store before Berty was stirring.

“ Good morning, Berty,” said he, pleasantly. “ You left your basket and broom in the street yesterday. I forgot all about it till just now ; and they’re quite gone before this. You can take mine, though. I sha’n’t want ’em any more, you know.”

Berty nodded, and took them without speaking. It seemed that she scarcely needed such tools now, rich as she was ; but she should feel lost without them, and they might help to occupy her mind until she had decided what to do with all that money. So she set off for the crossing, while Tim followed close at her heels, very uncomfortable, but quite determined to keep her in sight. He had gotten no farther through his puzzle, poor boy, than this first determination ; and this playing the policeman upon Berty was not at all to his taste.

And Berty liked it as little as he ; for more than anything else she dreaded to meet those

eyes, the only ones which had seen her hidden treasure, — more than anything else she wished to avoid a talk with their owner, the only person in all New York who knew her uncomfortable secret. She thought perhaps he would leave her at the crossing, and go on to the ferry if she took no notice ; so she began to hunt very carefully among the rubbish in the gutter, as if she had eyes and thoughts for nothing else ; but she could not help looking round slyly at last, and there was Tim posted at the corner with his basket, though there could be very little chance for customers among the few early passers-by. Presently, when the crowd began to thicken, she began to sweep the crossing with her back towards the sidewalk ; but, ever and anon, as she glanced over her shoulder, she would catch sight, between the flitting figures, of her little policeman, never looking for customers at all, never speaking, never coming nearer, but watching, watching still.

It was very provoking. What could Tim mean by it ? She would not have him watching there ; she would send him away. But

if she once spoke to him, what might he not say to her? what might he not do? It was a new feeling, this being afraid of Tim, and not by any means a pleasant one; but one thing was certain: she could never come to any decision, — she could never do anything with the money while Tim was watching there. Bertie was just thinking of running away herself, when a stage stopped at the crossing directly in front of her, and out stepped the pleasant-looking gentleman, with the old cheery smile upon his face. That decided her; she dropped her broom in a twinkling, and scampered away up the street.

On and on she ran, passing through street after street, turning corner after corner, till at last, quite breathless and spent, she ventured to look behind, and seeing she was not pursued, took courage to slacken her pace. Still she dared not go back to the crossing; she was even afraid to return to Mrs. Flanagan's, lest the gentleman should be seeking her there; and so she wandered on, the streets growing less and less familiar, till she had lost her way entirely, and then sat down, quite wearied out, upon the curb-stone, to

rest herself a little and determine what to do. It was a handsome street, clean, and well paved, and lined with stately brown-stone houses, not at all like any part of the city where Berty had ever been before. Though it was nearly noon, the people on the sidewalks were few and far between, and, but for the stages and the handsome carriages, the street would have seemed very lonely and quiet. Berty thought to herself it could not be a very good place for the rag-pickers and the crossing-sweepers. But who was that skulking behind the area railing yonder, and peeping out at her? Berty started up in alarm, but she was too tired to run away now; and, after all, it was only Tim. Tim could not do her any great harm; upon the whole, she would be rather glad to see him than otherwise, for he would know the way home. So she sat down again and waited for him to come.

But Tim did not come. He stayed behind the railing, only peeping out now and then to make sure that his charge did not steal away unperceived. He had taken it for granted that Berty was running away from

him, for he knew nothing about the strange gentleman; and so he had been skulking behind things and people all the way up in such a sly fashion that any one who noticed him at all must have taken him, poor honest fellow, for the culprit, instead of Bertie.

Bertie waited, as I said, and wondered; and when she found Tim was not coming to her, plucked up courage at last to go to him. Tim could scarcely believe his eyes; but he did not run away from Bertie, you may be sure. He made room for her upon the stone step beside him, and received her with a very pleasant smile.

"What made you run away, Bertie?" said he. "Sure, you knew I'd never harm you."

Bertie was very glad Tim had put this construction upon her flight, for she dreaded, of all things, letting him know about the gentleman. "What made you watch me so, then, Tim?" said she.

Tim was not quite prepared with an answer to this question, so, in true Irish fashion, he turned it off with a joke. "A cat may look at a king, Bertie," he answered; "and you're no better than a king, sure."

“And you’re no better than a cat, Tim,” answered Bert, sharply. “You looked just like one, I’m sure. But I don’t want to talk about that now,” she added, decidedly; “and if you begin, I shall run away. I want you to show me the way home.”

“You’re too tired to go home now, Bert,” said Tim, with a pitying glance at the pale, anxious face. “Sit down here, and rest a bit, and eat an apple. You’re hungry, I’m sure. I’ll never say a word you don’t like, honey,—see if I do.”

Bert *was* very tired, and not a little hungry; so, having confidence in Tim’s promise, she sat down beside him; while Tim, having made up his mind that his best chance of influencing her was by removing her fear of him, set himself to entertain her to the best of his ability.





CHAPTER VIII.

BERTY RUNS AWAY FOR THE LAST TIME.



BERTY would scarcely have sat there so securely, though, if she had known who was making his way, through all the downtown maze, towards the very house in front of which she and Tim had settled themselves.

Perhaps my young readers have not forgotten the aunt Emily of whom little Mary spoke in a former chapter. This house belonged to that very aunt Emily; and the fine carriage, with the handsome bay horses, which was drawn up in front of the door, and upon the merits of which Tim was expatiating, belonged to Mrs. Grey, who, with her little grand-daughter, was making a morning visit to aunt Emily.

While the old ladies were gossiping to-

gether, little Mary sat by the window watching the passing stages, and looking out for Dr. John, who had promised to return that way when his business down town was finished, and take them with him to visit a hospital where some of the patients were under his care. When Berty and Tim came and sat down in front of the gate, Mary turned her attention a little from the stages and began watching them.

Berty's pale face and weary look soon interested her very much; for, ever since that talk with cousin John she had been looking out for some one whom she could help. Here was, perhaps, the very case she wanted, for these children were certainly poor enough, and the little girl especially looked very sad; but how could she begin? Just then, aunt Emily, whose only notion of entertaining children seemed to consist in feeding them, ordered a plate of cakes brought in for Mary to eat. Mary was not at all hungry, so she only broke off a little corner of one, not to seem rude, and set the plate upon the window-seat. Then it occurred to her that perhaps the little girl

was hungry and might like some of the cakes. At least it would give her a good excuse for talking a little.

"Aunt Emily," said she, "there is a little girl and boy out here by the steps, and they look hungry. May I give them some of my cakes?"

"If there are more than you want, my dear," answered the old lady; "but mind and don't go very near them, Polly, or you may catch some disease."

Very glad of this permission, Mary took the plate of cakes in her hand and went out upon the steps. Hearing the door close, Tim and Berty looked round, and seeing the little girl coming down the steps, supposed she was coming out of the gate, and rose to go away.

"Don't go away, please," said Mary. "I was only coming to bring you some cakes. My aunty gave me some, and there were more than I wanted, so I brought some out for you. Wouldn't you like some?" And she held the plate out to them over the little iron gate.

The cakes looked very inviting, and the



little girl's manner was so courteous that it would have seemed quite uncivil to refuse ; so Tim made his best bow, and Berty dropped a courtesy, while each took a cake.

" Oh, take more, take them all ; I meant them all for you," said Mary, still holding out the plate. " If there are too many to eat now, you can put them in your pockets and take them home."

" Take them, Berty," said Tim, " since the little Miss is so kind. I can put them in my basket for you, and the childer will be glad of them ; they don't get such every day, ye know."

" So you have some brothers and sisters ? " said Mary, after the plate was emptied and the contents stowed in Tim's basket. " How many ? "

" There are four younger than me, Miss," answered Berty : " two boys and two girls."

" And I have two, — a brother and sister. Mine are twins. Are any of yours twins ? "

" No, Miss ; we all come in a row. Mother said we are like little steps," said Berty.

" You have a mother, then. My father and mother are dead ; there are only the

babies and I," said little Mary, sorrowfully.

"Are they?" cried Berty, drawing nearer to Mary with a shy feeling of sympathy. "So are mine, too; and there are only the children and me, except uncle Gottlieb in the old country; and we cannot hear from him since mother died."

"What!" cried Mary, in amazement. "Have you nobody to take care of you? no grandmother, or cousin, or aunt?"

"No, Miss; we have only each other."

"But who feeds you, then? Who buys your clothes for you?"

"We have not much, Miss," said Berty, simply. "But what we have we get ourselves, my brother and I; the others are too little."

"But how can you?" cried Mary, utterly unable to understand such destitution. "You are too little to work yourself, and your brother," glancing at Tim, "is not very big. How can you take care of so many?"

"We pick things from the gutters, Miss," said Berty, "and sometimes we sweep the crossing; and Mrs. Flanagan forgives us the rent."

“ Oh, it is very sad ! ” cried Mary, clasping her hands ; “ it is much worse than us. Cousin John said there were others much worse off than I, but I did not see how it could be. He said I could help them. Can I help you ? I have not any money here, but I have some at home. Will you come there and let me give you some ? I should like so much to help you if I might.”

Berty scarcely knew how to answer these eager questions, so unexpected and so kind. What answer she would have made I cannot tell ; for, while she was considering, a stage stopped in front of the gate, and Mary called out eagerly, “ There is cousin John ! Oh, cousin John ! have you found the pocket-book ? have you some money with you ? Here is a little girl who has no father or mother, and I want — ”

Little Mary never finished her sentence, for Berty heard that word “ pocket-book,” saw and recognized the strange gentleman getting out of the stage, and, putting both hands to her bosom, darted, with a wild cry of terror, out into the street. Tim dropped his basket and sprang after her ; but he was

too late,—the stage-horses, frightened by the cry, had started on, trampling poor Berty under their feet.

There was a moment's confusion, little Mary and the stage-passengers screaming, and Tim, the Doctor, and Mrs. Grey's coachman all springing to the horses' heads while a little crowd of people gathered round. Then Dr. John pushed his way through it, bearing Berty in his arms, bleeding, bruised, and quite insensible.

"Don't bring her in here, John! pray don't!" called out aunt Emily from the window,—to which she and Mrs. Grey had been attracted by Mary's cries,—as she saw the young Doctor turning towards the steps. "She'll die, or there'll have to be some operation, and I never could bear it in the world. Don't bring her here."

Dr. John made an impatient gesture, and looked appealingly towards Mrs. Grey: "Shall I take her home, grandmother?"

"Certainly, John," said the good lady, "if you do not think it too far. She is not dead?"

"No; only fainted," said the Doctor, "and

shockingly hurt. Bring me out some harts-horn, and lend me your handkerchiefs, some of you," added he, bearing the child towards the carriage.

"Cousin John," said Mary, pushing her way through the crowd, "why don't you take her to the hospital? It is so much nearer, and you were going there, you know."

"The very thing. You have more sense than any of us, Polly," cried the Doctor, springing into the carriage with Berty still in his arms. "Drive to the hospital, Tom, carefully, but as quickly as possible."

"And her brother, — here's her brother. Pray, let him go with you, cousin," said Mary, pushing poor, frightened, anxious Tim towards the carriage-door.

"Certainly. Jump in, my little fellow," said the Doctor, kindly.





CHAPTER IX.

THE HOSPITAL.



HEN Berty came to herself, she was lying on a bed, and the strange gentleman was bending over her, with a very anxious expression upon his pleasant face. Her first impulse was to try running away once more, but she found she had not strength enough to lift her head from the pillow. Then she became conscious that there was a bandage round her temples, and that a kind-looking lady was beside the gentleman, helping him to unfasten her dress. "They'll find the pocket-book now," thought she, and she tried to put up her hands to shield it; but the right one was strangely powerless, and the left one the gentleman held in his, while he felt her pulse. When the lady came to the pocket-book, which she presently did to Berty's great distress,

she took it in her hand, and squeezing it a little, handed it to the gentleman, saying, "I don't know what it is." It was no wonder she did not know, for Berty had wrapped it carefully in several papers, and tied it with a piece of string before she left home that morning.

"Never mind," said the gentleman, passing it to Tim, who, Berty now saw for the first time, was standing at the foot of the bed. "Never mind, Madam; only make haste, and cut the sleeve from the right arm there. I suspect it is broken."

Berty thought it very strange that the gentleman should not know his own pocket-book when he held it in his hand; but she was so frightened at the thought of her broken arm that she could scarcely feel relieved at her escape. The sleeve was soon cut away, and the gentleman lifted the wounded arm gently, and felt it tenderly here and there. The pain caused by the motion was so great that Berty could scarcely help crying out with it; but she made a great effort, and kept still.

"Yes," said Dr John at length,—of course

my young readers have guessed that Dr. John and the strange gentleman were one and the same person, — “yes, it is as I feared: the shoulder is dislocated, and the forearm broken.”

Tim gave a pitying exclamation, and Bertie a little frightened cry.

“Don’t be alarmed, my dear,” said the Doctor. “It is not so very bad. If you are only brave and patient, we can put it all right again directly; and after that we shall take such good care of you that you will be quite sorry when you are well enough to go away. All our little people are sorry when their time comes to leave us; are they not, Mrs. Gantz?”

“But the children,” cried Bertie, in dismay, — “what will become of the children?”

“Sure, ye know I’ll not let them suffer, Bertie,” said Tim. “Never you worry for them.”

“Yes, we’ll take care of the children,” said the Doctor. “Never fear for them. Now, Bertie, see how still you can lie; and you, Madam, keep hold of this hand while I feel of that poor shoulder again;” and, with a single dexterous motion, Dr. John brought

the bone back to its wonted place. Berty had been too much taken by surprise to cry out at first, and when it was over she felt too faint even to groan.

“You are a brave little girl,” said the Doctor, wiping the pale face tenderly and holding a glass of water to Berty’s lips. “The worst is over; it is only to dress the arm now and attend to one or two other little matters. My boy,” turning to Tim, “you may go down to the carriage, — I think Tom is back by this time, — and tell him to drive home with you, and ask Mrs. Grey to put up a good basket of provisions. By the time you are back again I shall be ready to go with you.”

Tim telegraphed, in answer to Berty’s imploring look, that he would take care of the pocket-book, and would not betray her; for Tim, it must be remembered, had not the slightest notion to whom it belonged, not having noticed little Mary’s question, and he would not, for the world, have exposed Berty to the risk of going to the Tombs by taking it to the station-house now: and yet the honest boy could not help feeling almost guilty

as he put the package in his pocket and went down to the carriage.

"Now we are rid of the boy," said Dr. John, who had been all the time busily at work putting splints and bandages upon the broken arm, — "now we are rid of the boy, we'll attend to that bruise on the side and the sprained ankle; and then I think you can change her clothing a little, perhaps. Does your arm feel better now, my dear?"

"Much better," answered Berty, faintly; — "but oh, my side!"

The side was, indeed, the worst injury, for the horse's hoof had struck there, tearing off the skin and inflicting a frightful bruise. The Doctor feared at first that a rib was broken, but finally concluding it was not, he dressed the wound carefully and bandaged the sprained ankle. Then the good nurse put on a little white night-gown in place of the soiled and torn dress; and, by the time Tim came back, Berty was much more comfortable, though still very faint and in great pain.

"Your sister is a right brave little girl," said Dr. John, as Tim came to the bedside.

"I never had a grown-up patient who behaved better."

"Berty's not one of the whining sort," Tim answered; "but, sir, she's not my sister at all."

"Ah! is she not? I thought you were very unlike," said Dr. John, glancing from one to the other.

"She's Dutch and I'm Irish, sir; but we live in the same house."

"Fellow-lodgers, eh? That explains it. But about these children, now. How many are there?"

"Four, sir," answered Tim.

"And you don't mean to say," said the Doctor, turning to Berty, "that there is no one who takes care of them but you?"

"Lieb helps me," answered Berty, faintly, turning her face away from Dr. John's compassionate gaze. Berty did not much like talking to, or looking at, the Doctor, kind as he was, and pleasant as he looked, for the pocket-book somehow would come between.

"Who is Lieb?" asked Dr. John, turning again to Tim.

"He is her brother, sir; but he's younger

than she, and they've no one else. The father died at sea, and the mother wint afther him last spring, sir. It's very hard upon Berty, sir, feeding so many little mouths, and she'll not let me help her, though I've tried, many a time and oft."

"Hard enough, indeed," said Dr. John, exchanging a glance of surprise and pity with the nurse; "but she can't help herself now, my lad; so you and I will take care of them in spite of her. You are faint and tired, my dear," he added, turning to Berty; "but all you have to do now is to rest and get well. I would go to sleep directly, if I were you. We'll look after the children, this young gentleman and I; and I promise you they shall not want for anything. I will see you again to-morrow. Good night, now, and God bless you."

Berty could only murmur a faint "Thank you," in answer to all this kindness; for the pocket-book loomed up very big by this time, I can tell you. When the Doctor and Tim were gone, and the nurse, after smoothing the bedclothes and arranging the pillows very comfortably, went off to attend to her other

patients, Berty tried to think the matter over and decide what to do; but she was much too faint and tired for such weary work, and soon, in spite of her efforts, obeyed the Doctor's parting injunction, and fell asleep.

Great was the amazement at Mrs. Flanagan's when the grand carriage drove up, and Dr. John and Tim got out; and dire were the lamentations of Berty's little family when informed of the accident. But Tim's glowing account of the comforts of the hospital and the kindness of the Doctor and the nurse went far to console them; and Mrs. Grey's famous basket of provisions, too, was a great help: for these poor little children seldom tasted anything really good; and even Gottlieb and Lina, who were the only ones old enough to appreciate their sister's misfortune, could not help heartily enjoying the wholesome food.

Fritzzy cried a little for his Berty when bedtime came, but Lina managed to soothe him; and, for the rest, the Doctor's pleasant face had so won their hearts that they were quite ready to credit Tim's assurance that both they and Berty would be safe under his care.

Tim did not sleep at the foot of the stairs again, but spread his straw pallet at the head of them, close to the children's door, in spite of uncle Teddy's remonstrance. He did not mind the hard bed in the least; but the pocket-book pricked so, through the thin pillow under which it was laid for safe-keeping, that Tim resolved to bring Berty to terms on the morrow, or never to take charge of it again.





CHAPTER X.

MRS. GREY'S SUSPICION.



R. JOHN was met at the door on his return by little Mary who had been sitting at the window an hour or more, watching for him to come.

She had worked off a little of her enthusiasm in packing the basket of provisions, but was still full of eager curiosity and sympathy. Grandmamma, too, was very anxious to hear more of the little sufferer at the hospital, and the helpless children of whom little Mary had told her. So Dr. John was obliged to go over the whole story of Berty's injuries, and her patient endurance of the painful operation and dressing,—of her anxiety for her little ones,—of Tim's touching account of the helpless family, given during their drive,—and, last of all, he was made to describe Mrs. Flanagan's house, and the room in the attic, and the poor little orphans themselves.

"But there is one thing," said Dr. John when he had finished his story, and answered every question Mary could think of, — "there is one thing for which I cannot account. The child was talking to you, Polly, when the stage stopped; was she not? What could have possessed her to dart into the street in such a frantic way, I cannot tell; and the boy seemed quite as much at a loss to account for it as I. What were you saying to her, Polly?"

"I don't remember," answered Mary, thoughtfully, — "Oh, yes, I do, too! She had been telling me about the children, you know, and I offered to help her, and then I remembered that I hadn't my purse; and then I saw you, and I asked if you had found your pocket-book, because I wanted to borrow some money; and then she ran. I know now I thought it was because she didn't want to take it; and then came the accident and put everything out of my head."

"But about the pocket-book, John," said Mrs. Grey, "I have not heard you say. Did you find it, or get any trace of it?"

"Not the least. I sent an advertisement to the 'Herald' and another to the 'Times,' and

stopped the drafts at the bank, and left the description, with the numbers of the checks and a few of the larger notes, at the police-office. I don't see that I can do any more. It is a large sum, more than I can well afford to lose; but if it is gone I cannot help it. So you need not look so doleful, Polly. I shall get along without it somehow."

"If you would only let me give you some of mine, cousin John. I have so much more than I know what to do with."

"Have you? Well, I shall know where to come, then, when I get hard up."

"I wouldn't lend him any, if I were you, Polly," said Mrs. Grey, smiling. "He'll be sure to lose it, such a careless fellow. I always told you what would come of it, John, sticking your purse in such out-of-the-way places."

"It was in my breeches-pocket this time, Grandma,—just where you taught me to keep it when I was a boy."

"As if you were anything else now!" said Mrs. Grey, shaking her head at him; "and I don't believe you know in the least where it was."

“ Yes, I do,” insisted Dr. John, “ because I remember it was in the way when I wanted a dime from the bottom of that same pocket for a poor little girl at the crossing, and I took it out — ”

“ And never put it back again,” interrupted his grandmother. “ There, I knew just how it was. You’re not fit to be trusted with a purse at all. You must leave it at home next time with Polly and I. We know better than to lay a stuffed pocket-book down upon a stage-seat, as if it was a paper parcel.”

Dr. John appeared to pay very little attention to the old lady’s raillery. He was thinking too intently, — trying to remember something, if one might judge by his knitted brows. “ Yes,” he said, at length, as if he had gotten at it at last, — “ yes; I am sure of it. The child at the crossing and this little Berty are the same. I thought I had seen her somewhere. And what is more,” he added, interrupting Mary’s wondering exclamation, — “ what is more, I saw her again at that same crossing when I went down town this morning; and I was feeling for a dime

when she dropped her broom and ran off up the street as if the sight of me had frightened her out of her wits. Look at me, Polly. Am I so very ugly? Do I look like an ogre to frighten little girls?"

"You are not a bit like an ogre, cousin John," said Polly, patting lovingly the comely face, which bent down to hers. "You are very handsome, and you know it. Nobody could be frightened at you, and I'm sure Berty wasn't; but it is very strange."

"It is more than strange," said Mrs. Grey, thoughtfully. "I don't like the look of it at all. Is it possible, John, that the child has your purse?"

"My purse!" cried Dr. John, astonished. "Surely not; how can you think so?"

"Oh, Grandmamma!" said Polly, indignantly; "that good, poor, innocent little Berty! How can you say such cruel things?"

"Think a moment, John," pursued the old lady, giving little heed to Mary's remonstrance. "You are certain you have not seen it since you took it out to give this child the dime?"

"I certainly have not. I missed it when I put my hand in again to get my fare."

"And you are sure you had it then?"

"As certain as I can be of anything; for I remember thinking how much trouble you gave me by insisting upon my keeping it in such an inconvenient place."

"And this child has run away from you twice now in the most unaccountable manner," the old lady went on; "and if it had been all right, after getting a dime from you once, she would have been certain to wait for another. It is not like these street-children, whatever Polly may think, to refuse what is offered to them. It is very sad. I am quite as unwilling to believe it as Mary can be; but, if you are certain you had it, and there were no pickpockets in the car, I'm afraid this little Bertie knows something about the pocket-book. John, I'm very much afraid it's not all right."

Dr. John started out of another fit of musing as his grandmother ceased speaking, and glanced at Mary, who was by this time weeping bitterly over what seemed to her these cruel suspicions of her little favorite.

"Well, Grandma," said he, with a meaning look at the old lady, "I can't be at all sure about the pickpockets. I may have had one for my next neighbor, for aught I know; or I may have laid the purse down on the seat, as you said. It would be just like me, I dare say; so we won't suspect anybody, — we'll wait and see; and meantime we'll put the whole matter out of our heads."

"And you don't think it's Bertie, cousin John?" said Mary, drying her tears; "so I may use some of my money for her and for the little ones, and I may hope it is like doing it for Him?"

"Certainly, Polly; how can you doubt it?"

"I was afraid," said Polly, timidly, "if Bertie was a thief, you know she would not be one of his brethren. Do you think it would be the same?"

"Just the same, if it is done for his sake."

"Then, cousin John, will you tell me how to help them most?"

"I don't think you can do much for Bertie now," said Dr. John; "you will have to leave her to the tender mercy of Mrs. Gantz and myself; but those little people down there

are sadly in need of clothing. They are the oddest-looking little mortals; the girls' dresses are like patchwork quilts, and as for the boy,—well, I shouldn't care to have Berty for my tailor, poor child. I think the best thing you can do is to get Grandma to go with you there in the morning, and find out what they need. I dare say you'll get rid of all your superfluous cash. I shouldn't wonder if you had none left by the time I come to want, and then we shall both have to fall back upon Grandma."

So Polly soon lost the sad suspicions in a vision of coats and frocks and shoes; but Dr. John, through all his kind plans, was tormented by an uncomfortable remembrance of that little package which Mrs. Gantz had taken from Berty's bosom, and of the telegram which had passed between his little patient and Tim. I say uncomfortable; for, though Dr. John would have been very glad to find his purse, he would rather have found it anywhere else than in Berty's or Tim's possession.



CHAPTER XI.

THE CHAPEL SERVICE, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.



HE morning sunshine streamed through the lofty windows of the children's ward, lighting up cheerfully the snowy beds and the pale faces of their little occupants, and waking Bertie from her feverish, uneasy slumber. She was puzzled at first by the unfamiliar objects around; but the bandage on her forehead, with the powerless arm and aching side, brought back the remembrance of the accident, even before the kind nurse appeared with her cheerful, motherly face and pleasant greeting. This good lady's watchful attentions, the morning bath so tenderly administered, the delicate invalid breakfast so invitingly spread upon the little tray, and the bright room where even suffering was made to look so

cheerful and comely, were all so new and so delightful, that Berty thought it almost a privilege to be ill in such a place.

Afterwards, too, when breakfast was over, and the nurse propped her up with pillows, and left her to attend to other duties, Berty was very happy, though her arm and side were still very painful. She thought she could never tire of looking at the beautiful prints upon the walls, nor of watching and listening to her young companions, who seemed to be quite at home, and called to each other, from bed to bed, as merrily as any well children could do. But presently some one spoke of the Doctor, hoping he would come early; and, at the mention of that name, all Berty's joy and contentment melted away in a moment, and she sank back upon her pillow, with a look of care and weariness upon her face which made all the children pity her very much indeed.

The old tormenting question, What to do, had come back again, and it seemed to Berty more troublesome than ever before. The Doctor had been so kind, both to her and to her little ones, — how could she bear to

do him such injury as to keep his property? But he evidently knew nothing about her possessing it,—he had held it in his hand without seeming to have the least suspicion; and now she was ill she had no chance of earning anything: she could never accomplish her design in any other way.

Just in the midst of these painful thoughts, the nurse came in ushering Tim to pay her his morning visit. Tim had left home with the firm determination to make Berty do the right thing about the pocket-book, or else refuse to have anything more to do with it; but, remembering her strange conduct about it from the first, he was a little shy about beginning. So he sat down by the bed, and gave Berty a long and glowing account of the Doctor's kindness to the children, and the great fancy they had taken to him,—a very good way of beginning, if Tim had only known it. After he had spun this subject out as long as he could, and answered all Berty's questions about little Fritz, he came to a dead stop for a moment, and was just mustering courage to commence his lecture, when a strain of sweet music floating in

seemed to fill all the hall with a cheerful solemnity.

“What is it, Tim?” asked Bert, after listening a moment.

“It’s the organ, I think,” answered Tim.

“The organ! Where?”

“Why, in the chapel, sure; don’t ye know, Bert, there’s a chapel here, a little church like, right in the middle of the building? All the halls open into it; and it’s beautiful, I tell you.”

“But it’s not Sunday, Tim.”

“No; but I think they has service every day,—leastways, I saw the people sitting there whin I wint out last night, waiting like. But it’s a feast to-day, Bert; it’s All-Saints, ye know,—the first of November. Belike they’d have service to-day, if ever. I was to go to Mass meself but for you; thin I put it off till Vespers,” answered devout Tim.

“All-Saints,” said Bert, thoughtfully. “Ah, yes, I know,—*Das Fest Allerheiligen*: they keep it in my country, too. Mother took us to *die Kirche* last year, because of father, and now she is with him in *das Pa-*

radies. I *meant* to remember them to-day; I'm so glad this puts me in mind."

The music ceased, and a nurse, watching her patient near, held up a warning finger. There was a moment's silence, Tim bending his head reverently, and Berty closing her eyes, the only outward sign of which she was capable; then the service began. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." A strange beginning, perhaps, for a service in commemoration of the saints departed; but very well suited, assuredly, to make saints of those who were left behind. Perhaps the good clergyman had some such case as Berty's in his mind; certainly, he could have chosen no sentence which would have fixed her attention more securely.

The beautiful ritual which followed was quite unfamiliar to both Tim and Berty, the one being a Lutheran, and the other a Papist; but the slow, distinct utterance of the minister rendered every word perfectly

audible, and the solemn confession of sin is fitted for all who have named the name of Christ. When it came to the Lord's Prayer, all the children joined. Tim, recognizing the *Paternoster*, fell upon his knees; and Berty, lifting her well hand in supplication, repeated her *Vaterunser* with the rest.

As the service went on with Psalm, and Lesson, and Collect, Tim noticed that the children seemed to consider themselves quite a part of the congregation, joining in the responses, and singing with a hearty zeal which pleased him very much; but as for Berty, though she still lay with her eyes closed and her hand raised, her mind had wandered far away from the scene, around the dear ones she had lost. She tried to recall her father's dying words, her mother's parting counsel. She wondered in her troubled heart whether they could still look down upon their child, — whether they could know her uncomfortable secret. Then she thought of the Doctor again, and of his kindness to the little ones. Ah, if her mother knew it, how grateful she would be, how she would

think nothing too much to do for her children's friend. What *would* she say, how *would* she feel, if she knew how her daughter proposed to requite him ?

But, all at once, as the notes of a hymn died away and the clergyman's voice was heard again, it seemed to Bertie that it took a more stern and solemn tone. She could not help listening, and, while she listened, the words seemed to carry her straight into the presence of Him "to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid." She had thought of her mother, and of the Doctor, and wondered what they would think *if* they knew ; but here was One who *did* know, from whom she could not hide her secret if she would. What did He think ? How would her " desires " bear His inspection ?

Bertie trembled with terror as she asked herself this question, and, even as she asked it, the answer came ; for the solemn voice went on to the rehearsal of the familiar Commandments which she had learned at her mother's knee ; while, at the end of each one, the response swelled up from the

chapel, — “ Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.” Berty held her breath as if waiting for a blow ; and at last it came, in that stern, solemn voice, — “ *Thou shalt not steal.*” Tim, too, had been waiting for this, and his voice joined in the response, “ Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law,” with a startling emphasis, which went to Berty’s heart ; then, almost before the words had left his lips, he leaned forward and whispered earnestly, “ Say it, Berty, — say it for your life.” It seemed to Berty almost as if her life did hang for a moment in the balance, — only a moment though, for she could not hesitate. She raised her hand again, and murmured the petition so faintly that Tim could scarcely hear. Another heard, and answered it, as we shall presently see ; and Tim heard, too, and gave thanks upon his knees that his Berty was saved.

“ Now, Berty,” said he, rising when the service was ended, and taking the package from his pocket, — “ now, Berty, you know what I’m going to do, — take this to the station right off.”

“To the station! What for, Tim? Of course that would be easier; but maybe they wouldn’t find him; and then, Tim, don’t you think he ought to know? It would be very hard, to be sure, but don’t you think I ought to tell him?”

“An’ who’s him, Berty?” asked Tim, quite puzzled.

“The Doctor, of course. Oh, Tim, didn’t you know it was the Doctor’s? That’s one thing why I couldn’t do it.”

“The Docther’s! You don’t mane to tell me now, Berty, that this pocket-book belongs to the Docther?”

“Yes, Tim; he gave me a dime there at the crossing, and this dropped, and I ran after the stage, but they didn’t notice me, and then at first I meant to take it to the station or something; but I thought of my Christmas tree, and so — and so — I didn’t.”

“Well, Berty,” said Tim, after a long, thoughtful pause, “I’m glad I didn’t know the rights of the matther till ye had come to a betther mind, for I can’t say I think well of it. So it’s running away from *him* ye were, and no wonder; and he had it in

his own hand too, sure enough. Yes, it's well I didn't know, for I should have given it back to him straight, and it'll look better coming from you."

Berty quite agreed that it would look better coming from her, and yet her heart sank within her when she saw the Doctor's pleasant face appear at the door. He came straight towards her bed, only nodding to the other children as he passed them.

"Good morning, Berty," said he; "how do you find yourself to-day?"

Berty did not wait to answer. Her courage was melting away so rapidly, that she felt she had no time to lose. She took the pocket-book from Tim and held it out to the Doctor.

"Here it is. Oh, take it! take it, quick!" said she, and burst into tears.

The Doctor took the package in his hand, and stood looking from one to the other. He had put his suspicions so entirely away that they did not readily return.

"What is it, Tim?" said he, at last.

"It's a pocket-book, sir, that Berty found. She says it's yours."

The Doctor changed color then, and tearing the cover away, examined the enclosure.

"Yes," said he, "it is mine. Where did you get it?"

"Please count the money then, sir," said honest Tim, before Berty could command her voice to answer. "I kept it for her last night. I should like you to see if it's all right."

"Why did you not give it to me then?" asked Dr. John, sharply, opening the pocket-book, and glancing rapidly over the contents.

"Oh, sir," said Berty, finding her voice instantly, — "Oh, sir, you must not blame Tim; he did not know it was yours. I never told him, and he was always at me to find the owner. I meant to give it back at first, and I should, but for the Christmas tree. I wanted it so much, so very much, and I could never earn enough. I'm very, very sorry; but you must not blame Tim."

"It is all right," said Dr. John, nodding to Tim, and putting the purse in his pocket. "Now, Berty," he added, soothingly, "you must not cry any more; it is all right and safe, and I'm very much obliged to you for

bringing it back ; it is not every one who would have done it. Stop crying now, and tell me how you got it, and about this Christmas tree. I do not understand."

"I wanted one for the children, sir," said Berty, composing her voice a little ; "they never saw one, you see, but I did ; and Madame Hansmann told them about those in the old country. So I heard them one night wishing for one,—only they said they could not have it, because they had no one but me. Then I wished so much to get one, because I promised mother to take such care of them ; and I asked Biddy, and she said they cost pounds and pounds ; and I did not believe quite in the fairy, so I thought I must earn it ; and I felt very bad, and almost gave it up. Then I thought about JESUS, and how mother said he would be our friend ; so I prayed, and I hoped he would help me. Then, the very first day, when you gave me a dime, the pocket-book came tumbling down beside me, and I did not know if it was yours ; but I ran after the stage, but nobody noticed ; and then I thought it might be sent because I prayed,

you know, — only, when I showed it to Tim he said it was as bad as stealing. That made me angry, and I would not speak to him; but I was not happy with it at all when I meant to keep it. Then in the morning I saw you at the crossing, and I thought you were looking for me, so I ran away; and, while I was talking to the little girl, you came again, so I got all wild like, and ran into the street. Then you were so kind, I did not know about keeping it last night, only for the tree; but this morning I thought of mother, because of the feast of All-Saints, and the minister said the Commandments, and I could not keep it any longer for the children, or anybody, — don't you see?"

I am not at all sure that Dr. John did see, for I know that his eyes were full of tears when Berty finished; but he seemed to understand quite clearly for all that.

"Yes, Berty," said he, "I see that you have had a great temptation, and have won through it bravely. And as for Tim here, I beg his pardon; I perceive he is a very honest fellow. But he must bid you good-morning now, for I want to look at that side of yours."

Tim felt a little disappointed that Dr. John did not offer Berty something as a reward for bringing back his money, for Tim could not bear that the Christmas tree should be given up after all; but still he had great confidence in the Doctor, and did not doubt but he would make it all right somehow. So he went away to his peddling with a light heart.

As for Berty, she thought she had never felt so happy in her life, even though her wounds were very painful, and the Christmas-tree tapers had utterly gone out; for there was something shining upon Berty which lighted up her heart far more brightly than any Christmas tapers ever could, — her Heavenly Father's smile. And the Doctor, too, instead of being angry, seemed kinder than ever. He dressed her side and ankle very tenderly, and then sat down by the bed and talked for a long time, asking many questions about her family, and especially about the uncle Gottlieb in the old country, of whom little Mary had told him. Berty knew very little about him, except that he was her mother's only brother, — that he lived in

Frankfort, and belonged to one of the bands which she remembered with such delight as playing at the concerts on the feast-days. Madame Hansmann had written to him, it seemed, after her mother's death; but they had never received any answer.

"Well, Polly," said Dr. John, when he went home that evening, "I have found my pocket-book; and, what is more, I have got hold of a famous plan for spending your surplus money."

"I have a plan, too, cousin John," said Polly; "but let us hear yours first."

So the Doctor told Berty's story, which you will not care to hear for the third time; and as for his famous plan, I mean to keep that for a good ending to my story. Polly liked it very much, and so I dare say will you; but she could not give up her own, and so it was decided that both should be carried out.

"I am glad," said Polly, when all was finally arranged, — "I am glad, cousin John, that you found your pocket-book, for I should not wonder if you had to lend me some money, after all;" and Dr. John thought to

himself, as he looked down at the little girl's glowing, happy face, that any amount of money would have been well spent in working such a change as these kind schemes had made in his sad, little cousin.





CHAPTER XII.

THE WISH FULFILLED.



MARY'S plan, which developed itself the next day, turned out to be a project for taking the children, in their new clothes, to visit their sister at the hospital. She had stipulated that nothing should be said to Berty, though she had taken care to give Tim warning that he might be on hand to enjoy the surprise. It was a beautiful, bright autumn day, and everything worked to Mary's satisfaction. Grandmamma seemed to enjoy it as much as she; and even Tom, who had grumbled a good deal at bringing his horses so often into such "ojus" streets, could not resist a contagious grin as he lifted the happy children, one by one, into the carriage.

It was indeed a wonderful delight to Berty's little family. Driving through the

gay streets, where Mrs. Grey took care that Tom should go, in the handsome, easy carriage, would have been pleasure enough, but going in such a way to see Berty, whom they had missed so much, was almost more than they could bear. Then the wide lawn of the hospital, where the little pale children were playing in the sunshine, was a new surprise ; and the children's ward, with its lofty walls and little white beds, in one of which sister Berty lay, looking so placid and happy, seemed like a glimpse of paradise.

You will guess, of course, how joyfully Berty received them ; how she hugged little Fritz with her one arm, and set him on the bed beside her, while she made the others stand off, one by one, that she might admire them in the comfortable new clothing ; how she thanked Mrs. Grey and the Doctor and Mary ; how Tim grinned from ear to ear, and Dr. John rubbed his hands, and Polly clapped hers, and the nurse and old Mrs. Grey both cried, and the hospital children sat up in bed and laughed at the merry hubbub, until the matron came up and chided them all for making such a noise,

and threatened Dr. John with a policeman if he did not keep his party quiet.

Yes, it was a happy time ; and happy, too, though in a different way, was the long quiet time which followed, when, under the Doctor's kind care, Berty was growing better and stronger every day, and learning every day to love more and more dearly the pleasant room, the lively prints upon the walls, the happy little sick children, the gentle nurses, the good rector who stopped to talk with her so often, and the dear, dear Dr. John, to whom she owed it all.

The Christmas-time to which she had looked forward in her dreary attic on that dismal night — how far away the attic seemed, how long ago the night — was drawing near, was close at hand. Tim told her of the laurel-wreaths which they were hanging in the chapel. Her dearest wish was to get strong enough to go down there with Tim and keep the Christmas feast, and afterwards, perhaps, to have the children come to her again. It would be treat enough for them, she knew, and joy enough for her ; but when she asked the Doctor, she got no answer but a smile.

The Doctor was so busy nowadays, perhaps he had no time for anything but smiles And very busy, too, was little Mary; it was wonderful what a deal of shopping those two found it necessary to do together, and what piles upon piles of parcels, of all shapes and sizes, they brought home at night, and stowed away in that mysterious parlor which no one else was allowed to enter. If Polly paid for all those goods, I think she must have made a requisition upon Dr. John's new-found pocket-book; for I am sure no little girl's purse could have been half long enough.

But at last there came a day, the 24th of December it was, when Polly's purchases seemed to be all made. She did not go down-town at all that day, but spent all the morning closeted with Dr. John in the mysterious room. And, altogether, that seemed to be quite a mysterious day at Mrs. Grey's; for all day long there came such mysterious noises from the mysterious parlor, and Mrs. Grey and the housekeeper and Nurse Evans went about with such mysterious smiles upon their faces, that even Jenny and Jemmy seemed to have a notion that something was

the matter, and no amount of coaxing could keep them in the nursery. Then, towards evening, there came a mysterious ring at the door, and a mysterious stranger was ushered in, whose arrival seemed to fill Dr. Grey and Mary with the most mysterious surprise and delight; and finally the Doctor and Tom took the carriage and went off upon some mysterious errand.

If you could have peeped into the hospital just about that time, you would have seen that the mystery had penetrated even there; for Berty sat, wrapped in cloaks, in a great arm-chair, with a strangely excited expression upon her thin, pale face. She had received that morning a note, in a little white envelope, addressed to Fräulein Bertha Weisser. This note of course she could not read, but Mrs. Gantz read it for her. It was an invitation, in good set terms, to spend the evening with Miss Mary Kendall, at her grandmother's house; and accompanying this note was a new dress and other very comfortable things for Berty to wear. And so our little Berty sat there, very happy and eager, though a little frightened and shy, waiting for the carriage.

And when the carriage came, and Tom took her up in his strong arms and bore her down to it, a new surprise was waiting for Berty; for there were her little ones all peeping out to greet her with shouts of delight. Berty thought this was all that was needed to make her perfectly happy.

Miss Mary received them with a joyous welcome, and kind Mrs. Grey had a sofa ready furnished with pillows for Berty to rest upon, which Dr. John insisted that she should occupy at once, though she did not feel in the least tired.

The children were very shy at first, but Fritz and the twins soon made friends. Tim took upon himself to entertain Gottlieb, and as for Rosa and Lina, it was entertainment enough for them to look about them. Berty wondered at Tim; he seemed, she thought, quite as much at home in Mrs. Grey's handsome house as at Biddy Flanagan's, always the same merry, good-natured fellow, never shy, and never too forward; she wondered, too, at her little ones, so clean and bright and wholesome; and when she heard Fritz's happy laugh, she thought this was even

better than the Christmas tree for which she had longed.

Presently, little Mary, who had been flitting in and out in a most extraordinary manner, came in once more, and made a significant motion to Dr. Grey, seeing which, the Doctor, with a merry look, took her hand and led her up in front of Berty's couch.

"Berty," said he, "you were wishing for a fairy godmother, I hear. Mrs. Flanagan was right about one thing, the fairies do not emigrate ; but she was wrong about the other, for there is a tribe of them in America, wild as it is ; and as fast as you little people come over they adopt you, because there are not Yankee children enough to keep them busy. So you see everybody has a fairy godmother, and all is right. Hearing, from Mrs. Flanagan, that you were in need of yours, I have been at some pains to find her, and here she is, very happy to make your acquaintance."

Berty was quite puzzled by this speech, but Polly seemed to think it great fun ; her eyes fairly danced with glee as she dropped Berty a queer little courtesy, and said, "Dr.

Grey has summoned me, and I have come. You were wishing for a Christmas tree, he tells me. Ah, well; my children have but to wish, and, presto! it is here!" saying which she stamped with her little foot upon the floor, and, lo! the folding-doors of the mysterious parlor glided swiftly back and disclosed a wondrous sight, — a Christmas tree indeed, whose blazing tapers far outshone those which had lighted Berty's dreams, whose graceful branches bent beneath their weight of generous fruit! While the children's eyes were still dazzled with the burst of light, Dr. Grey and Mary stepped forward and took their stations on either side the tree. Then Mary turned to the wondering children, and pointing to it, said: "This, children, is Berty's Christmas Gift to her little family."

Berty was too happy, too thankful for words; she could only cast a grateful look at Dr. John, who, she felt sure, was at the bottom of it somehow; and Dr. John looked back at her with a merry twinkle in his eye, which she did not quite understand. The children, meanwhile, were pressing round the

tree, and devouring it with eager, wondering eyes.

"It is finer than the Westermann's, Lina," said Gottlieb, at last.

"But where is the Christ-child, Lieb?" said little Rosa. "I don't see him at all."

"But he is here, Rosa," said Dr. John. "He is here, though you do not see him. It is he who put it into the heart of Berty's fairy godmother here to give you this pleasure."

"Now," said Mary, who seemed somehow to be in a great hurry, "if you have gazed your fill, perhaps you would like me to gather you some fruit;" and she took a long, hooked stick which leaned against the wall beside her, and began to take off the presents from the tree.

I shall not trouble myself to describe those presents. Christmas trees, I am happy to say, are getting very common. A bountiful crop of them springs up every year all over the land, and I dare say there are none of you who have not assisted in stripping at least one. So I shall only tell you that every one of the children got a very satisfactory

share of the magical fruit,—every one except Bertie. Strange to say there seemed to be no present for Bertie. She never thought of wishing for one; it was all just as she had planned it herself, and she was heartily satisfied; but so were not the others. Tim especially, who had gotten a bountiful share himself, was greatly concerned about Bertie; and at last, when the branches were nearly bare, and nothing was yet forthcoming, he bethought himself of speaking to Dr. Grey. It might have been forgotten, though Tim did not see how that could be. At any rate, he knew Dr. John would never be content to have Bertie neglected, any more than he. So he made his way through the children to where the Doctor still stood beside the tree.

“Dr. Grey,” he whispered, “has Miss Mary forgotten Bertie, d’ye think—or what?”

“Bertie!” cried the Doctor, speaking very loud, and pretending to be quite astonished. “Sure enough! the tree is quite stripped, and Bertie has nothing! That’s a great oversight of yours, my good fairy; it will never do at all. Couldn’t you manage to spirit us in a present for Bertie yet?”

“What shall it be?” asked Mary, paying no attention to Bert’s exclamations and assurances that the tree itself was present enough for her.

“Since you have kept her waiting so long,” said the Doctor, “I think it should be something very nice,—something, for instance, from over the sea.”

Mary nodded, and, tapping her stick three times upon the floor, sang, in a queer little piping voice, which made all the children laugh,—

“Come, fairies, good fairies, bring swiftly to me
A present for Bert from over the sea!”

Then she stood quite still for a moment, and looked towards the door, as if expecting some one; and at last nodded and waved her hand, and, dropping a courtesy to the Doctor, said, “My good Doctor, your bidding is done. You will find a present for Bert there at your right hand. If my elves have been somewhat dilatory, you must excuse them; for the package, you perceive, was rather heavy.”

The Doctor sprang quickly aside, and, sure enough, there at his right hand, half hidden

by the spreading branches, was a heavy oaken chest, strongly bound with iron, which everybody stared at as if it had fallen from the sky.

"Upon me word, Miss Mary," said Tim, "if ye'd hire out yer elves down at the docks there, ye'd make yer fortin in no time. They're stronger than any derrick they have there, certain sure."

"Well, Tim," answered Polly, laughing, "I'll think of it."

"Somebody'll have to open it for Bert," said prudent Gottlieb, looking appealingly to Dr. John; "she never can."

"Sure enough. Shall we want a hammer, think you, or is it locked?" said Dr. Grey, bending over the chest with a puzzled look. "Ah, yes, here's a lock," he added, fumbling at the side towards the wall. "Have your elves brought the key, Madam Fairy?"

Polly fumbled in her pocket a little, and brought out a huge bunch of keys, one of which Dr. John, with great jingling, applied to the lock. Tim had a shrewd suspicion that the chest was not locked at all, nor even fairly closed; but, before he had time to

assure himself by nearer inspection, the cover flew up with a bang, and out sprang — what? A genie? All the children thought so at first, and shrank away, while Berty covered her eyes with her hands.

But the strange being, whatever it was, went straight to Berty's couch, and bending down, whispered some German words close in her ear. Berty could not help peeping out between her fingers. Surely, it was no genie. Would a genie call her his darling, his god-daughter, his dear, dear child? Would a genie look at her with blue eyes so like her mother's? Ah no, this was no genie, though he had come to her as strangely as any genie could. It was, it *could* be, no one in the world but the dear, dear uncle Gottlieb, from the blessed old Fatherland.

So Berty let the stranger take her in his arms, and gave him kiss for kiss, and answered his caresses with her own, and called the children to her, one by one, to show this dear uncle who had come so far to see them all. It was so sweet to little Berty to feel that strong arm round her, and to know that it was ready to shield her from all care and

harm ; it was so sweet to hear him call her children his, and to know that he would care for them as she, with all her efforts, never could have done.

Yes, it was uncle Gottlieb, to whom Dr. Grey had written as soon as he heard of him from Berty, and who, hearing thus, for the first time, of his sister's death, (for Madame Hansmann's letter had miscarried,) had hastened to the orphans, and arrived just in time to be put into Polly's strong box. He had entered heartily into the joke, though he declared that he had nearly smothered in carrying it out ; and Dr. John averred that he had chuckled so much as nearly to discover himself to the children before the time. Polly produced from the chest a whole bundle of presents for Berty, which she had hidden there the better to carry out her scheme ; but, though Berty was properly grateful, it was easy to see that uncle Gottlieb's niece thought him the best present of all. There is no need that I should tell you they spent a merry evening, — what could prevent them ? Uncle Gottlieb informed them next morning, for they all spent the night with hospitable

Mrs. Grey, that he had risen in the world, — become a composer of music and leader of the band; and also that some old relative in Frankfort had left him a little house. He had been thinking, he said, of getting a wife to keep house for him; but he should take the children all back with him, and Bertie should keep house: it would be much better, and leave him more time for his music.

And so Bertie and her little ones went back to the dear Fatherland. It was hard parting from the Doctor and Mary and Tim; but Dr. Grey promised to bring Mary to see them at Frankfort, which promise he has kept. And as for Tim, I have a shrewd suspicion that that young gentleman has by this time paid uncle Gottlieb off in his own coin, and taken Bertie another sea-voyage; but then Lina must be quite big enough for a housekeeper now.

